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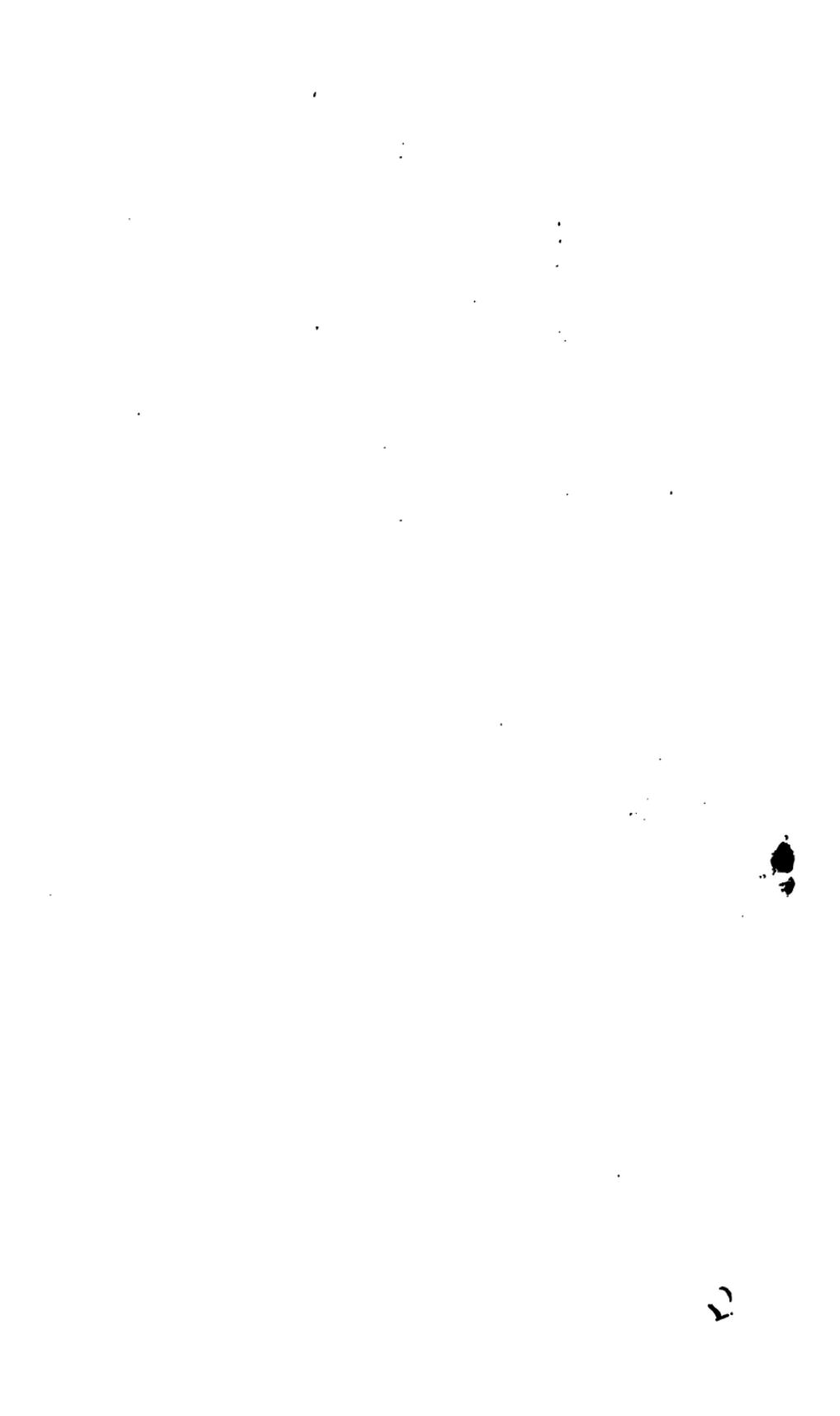
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HELPs TO DEVOTION

FOR

MY VILLLAGERS,

BEING

PRAYERS, HYMNS, & SERMONS,

(ORIGINAL)

BY THE

REV. THEODORE SHURT, M.A.,



LEAMINGTON.

"I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify
Him with thanksgiving."—PSALM lxix., v. 30.

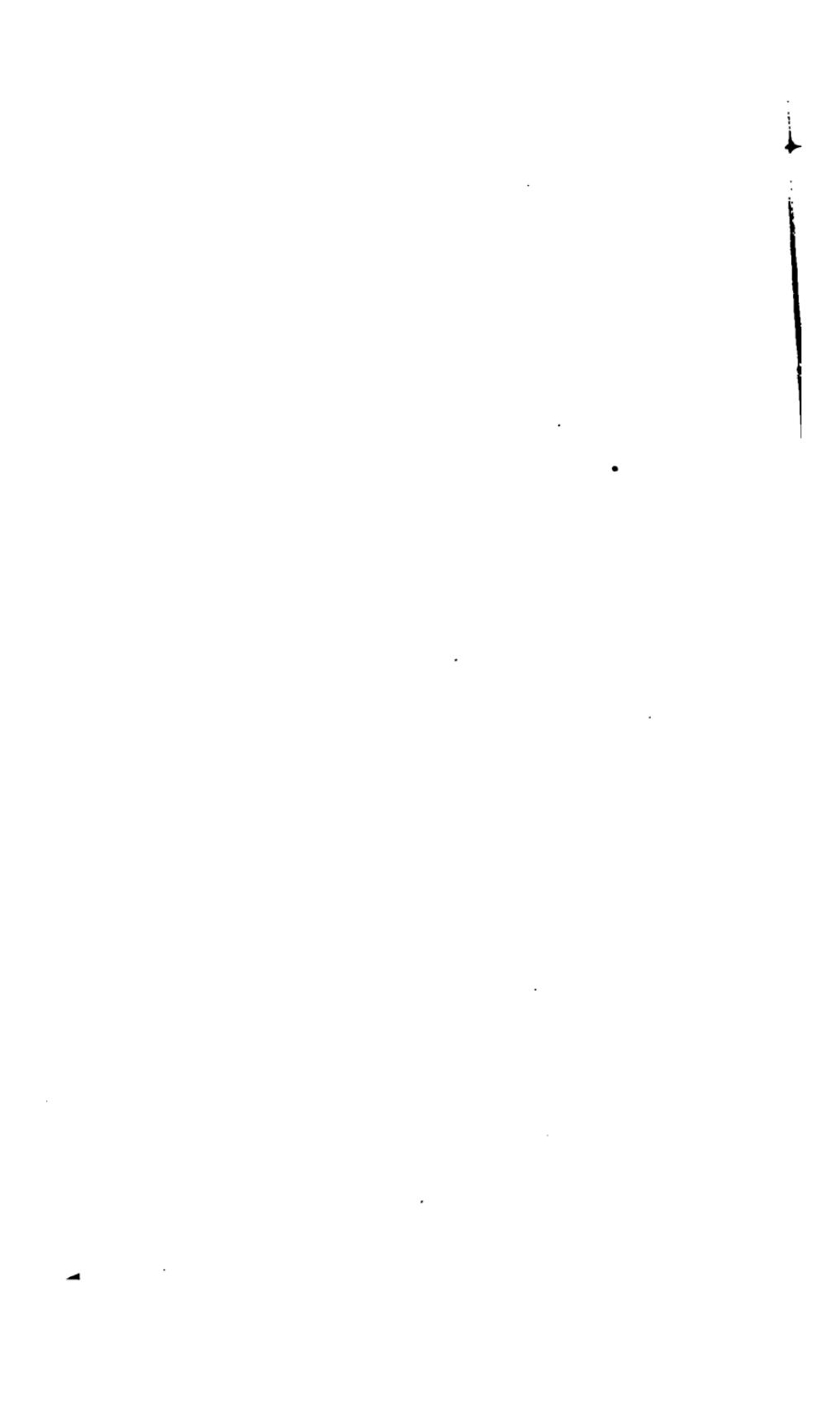
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P R E F A C E.

THE following compositions have been hastily put together in the hope that when the writer has long ceased to appear in the land of the living, his rural friends and neighbours may have something besides his tombstone to remind them of one, who for many years has laboured and prayed for their good.

Of course, in such humble productions, all attempts at much embellishment, fine writing or eloquence, are utterly disclaimed, as not only unnecessary, but unsuited to the dignity and grandeur of the solemn subjects, which are considered, and the character and condition of the people to whom they were addressed. In fact, they are left to tell their own unvarnished, unadorned story, and in this respect it has been the author's utmost desire to imitate as far as he could the noble simplicity of that blessed Gospel upon which they are all founded. If, years to come, when the hand which has penned them has lain long in the grave, this little volume shall lie about in the cottages of his poor

friends, and be, under the blessing of God, thus instrumental in turning their attention to some of the passages of Scripture quoted or referred to, the writer's labours will be well rewarded.

He must not omit to mention with great gratitude his obligation to Signor Rosario Aspa. That gentleman has kindly given his valuable assistance in preparing the music for some of the hymns, and from the taste that prevails among many of our rural population, there can be no doubt that such an accompaniment will be a great recommendation and call attention more generally to the hymns.

The writer is well aware of many and great imperfections and deficiencies in these unpretending compositions.

He knows that the critic may justly charge him with tautology, repetitions, looseness of style and many other faults. But he has written for usefulness, not for fame; and if he can make himself understood, and leave an impression upon his readers for their improvement, his object is gained.

LEAMINGTON,

March, 1872.

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MORNING PRAYER

FOR THE FATHER AND HIS FAMILY.

O ALMIGHTY and Eternal God, we bless and praise Thy glorious name, and thank Thee for all the mercies of the past night. We thank Thee for the refreshing rest which Thou hast been pleased to give us. We thank Thee for all the mercies of our past lives, for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life. But above all, do we thank Thee for that inestimable redemption which Thou hast wrought out for us through Thy blessed Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And we beseech Thee, O most merciful God, to enable us by Thy Spirit to lay hold of its mighty benefits. Give us sincere repentance and an earnest desire to turn unto Thee with all our hearts. Put Thy Spirit within us and give us new desires, new affections. Make us every day more and more Thy people. Bless us in our efforts to serve Thee better than we have ever yet done. Receive us into favour for the sake of Thy dear Son. Look not at our failings but at His merits: and for His sake forgive our sins, many and great though they be. And do Thou, blessed Jesus, plead our cause, and make our unworthy prayers acceptable by Thy all-sufficient merits presented in our behalf. Let not our sins rise up in judgment against us, but blot them out in Thy most precious blood. Remember Thy gracious

promise and send the Holy Spirit to guide and comfort us. O blessed Spirit, One with the Father and the Son, be Thou present with us this day, and teach us what to think and what to do.

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, ever-blessed, eternal God, in Thee is our trust. O God the Father, into Thine hands with the help of the Holy Ghost, we commend our souls, our bodies, and our spirits, and all things else, that we ought to commend, through our dear Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

OUR Father, &c.

[To which may be added on a Sunday.]

O MOST gracious and most merciful Lord God, we thank Thee for the return of this Thy holy day. Give us more abundantly of Thy blessed Spirit that we may go to Thy house with minds separated from the cares of this world and devoted more to Thy service. Give such effect to the preaching of Thy ministers this day, that many may be turned from sin and cleave unto Thee. Help us to form godly resolutions and give us strength to prepare ourselves to carry about with us during the coming week a sweet savour of Thy Sabbath and a constant remembrance of our high and holy privileges, our duties and Thy wishes. Thus may we be prepared to walk in the full assurance of faith, hope and charity and trusting in the aid of Thy Holy Spirit and the mediation of Thy blessed Son, with all humility and watchfulness work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, &c.

HYMNS.

MORNING HYMN.

Daylight gleams in eastern skies,
From the bed of sloth arise,
Haste to thank the Lord, and pray,
God has sent another day.

We have slumber'd safe and sure
By the care of God secure,
And to Him for all your days
Pay the tribute of your praise.

Holy Spirit, shine within,
Raise us from this life of sin,
Guide us through the coming day,
Drive all wicked thoughts away.

Rise, thou Morning Star divine,
Root and Branch of David's line,
Power o'er all to Thee is given,*
Usher in the day of Heaven.

* *St Matthew xxviii. v. 18.*

God the Father, from above
 Send this day new proofs of love,
 Every day is Thine, and we
 Grateful live this day to Thee.

Many souls ere morning light
 Far from hence have wing'd their flight :
 We by God's rich mercy still
 Here are spared to do His will.

Thanks to Thee, O God our King,
 Night and morning we would sing :
 All we owe no tongue can tell,
 Thou hast loved, and loved so well !

Glorious is the rising sun ;
 Sweet the breath of day begun ;
 Beauteous is the landscape fair
 Clothed in light and fragrant air :

But far greater joys they prove,
 Who have tasted of His love,
 Sought the Lord, and found Him near
 Ever willing prayer to hear.

Praise to Thee, O God most High,
 Praise from ocean, earth and sky,
 Praise from every soul to Thee,
 Praise through all eternity.

EVENING HYMN.

Soft the shades of eve draw nigh,
Twilight glimmers in the sky,
Twinkling stars begin to shine,
Rise, my soul, to things divine.

One is taken from the sum
Of the days that were to come—
Nearer to the grave I am !
Am I nearer to the Lamb ?

Saviour dear, above all praise,
Teach me to review my days,
Be Thou present all the night :
Turn my darkness into light.

Give my wounded spirit balm,
Shed o'er me a heavenly calm :
Peaceful shall my members lie,
Guarded by Thy watchful eye.

Helpless as a child new-born,
Sunk in sleep till early morn,
Soul and body know no fear ;
They are safe, for Thou art near.

Guard me whilst I dream, O Lord,
Cheer me waking with Thy word.
Let Thine angels watch and keep
From all wicked thoughts my sleep.

God of the defenceless, see
 How we all depend on Thee :
 Millions lie in sleep profound
 Whilst Thy love shields all around.

Some will pass this night in pain,
 Some will seek repose in vain ;
 Heavenly Father, look benign
 On these sufferers ; make them Thine.

Holy Spirit, fill their hearts
 With the joy Thy grace imparts,
 And according to Thy word
 Be with all, Thou triune Lord.

All we now to Thee resign :
 Let our will be only Thine.
 We shall sleep, and we shall still
 Wake up, if it be Thy will.

Thanks to Thee in every name,
 Thanks, O God, we would proclaim,
 Thanks, o'er every sea and coast,
 Father, Son, and Holy Ghost !

GOD'S NUMBERLESS MERCIES.

"All things are yours."—*1 Cor. iii. 21.*

O God, my Father and my Friend,
 When I look back I see no end
 Of Thy great goodness, Thy great love
 To all around, beneath, above.

If to the world's most distant bound
I fly, Thy goodness there is found
Creating and sustaining all,
Alike pervading great and small.

The greatest that the telescope,
The smallest that the microscope
Can reach, Thy wonders I survey,
Rich streams of mercy night and day.

Oh, Thou art good above all thought
And suffering though there be 'tis nought,
Compared with all the blessings given
To sons of earth, now heirs of heaven.

But one chief crowning mercy see,
The Saviour given to die for me,
For me and such like sinners slain,
To wash our souls from every stain !

And that blest Spirit from above
Sent to complete the work of love :
The Father, Son, and Comforter
On us, once rebels, grace confer.

AGAINST DESPONDENCY.

"Much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life."
Romans v. 10.

Shall I despair ? Behold, and see
 The great atonement made for me,
 God's only Son, the Lord of heaven
 Himself a sacrifice was given !

My soul, dost thou believe all this ?
 If so, unbounded is thy bliss.
 My sins are great, but greater yet
 Those mercies which I ne'er forget.

Shall I despair ? The golden three
 Forbid, Hope, Faith and Charity !
 Fly hence, unworthy thoughts : in hell
 Despair and anguish only dwell.

Prisoners of hope, on earth we stay,
 Till God drive every doubt away,
 And bring us in His boundless love
 To those bright realms of peace above.

O Spirit of th' Eternal come
 And raise me from this sinful gloom :
 Fill my weak heart with strength divine ;
 Remake my soul in image Thine.

“WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT.”*Eph. v. 8.*

Now or never must we fight :
Shun the darkness, seek the light.
Once ye darkness were, and sin
Darken'd all the light within.
Walk, ye children of the Lord,
In the full blaze of His word—

Walk in faith : to you 'tis given
Earth to quit and enter heaven.
Such high destiny is yours ;
Such a triumph Christ assures.
He has paid the price, and He
Rescues from sin's penalty.

Surely past times may suffice
To have walk'd in sin and vice ;
Surely now my God may claim
Every effort of my frame :
May I to His glory live
And in death my witness give.

HARVEST HYMN.

To God our voices let us raise
 In notes of gratitude and praise :
 His gifts with bounteous harvest crown'd
 Our Heavenly Father pours around.

The promises He made of old
 Wrought out before our eyes behold ;
 Seed-time and harvest, day and night,
 Bear witness to His truth and might.

O let, my soul, no doubts destroy
 Thy pure, ethereal, heaven-sent joy.
 Those grains* that once appear'd so dead
 Teem now with life and future bread.

And though shall moulder this poor frame,
 In person I shall rise the same,
 But glorified and changed in night,
 Henceforth a sinless child of light.

A glorious harvest that shall be,
 When my loved Saviour comes to see
 The travail of His soul complete,
 And all His foes beneath His feet.

* "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, &c."—*John xii. 24.*

When midst the wonders there reveal'd
Not one is miss'd of all He seal'd,
Though numerous as the golden grain
They crowd round His triumphant train.

Come, gracious Spirit, strengthen me
And teach me now from what I see,
To walk by faith, nor fear the way
That leads me to eternal day.

And Holy Father, draw me on*
And give me to Thine own dear Son,
As one to whom Thy grace is given
Wash'd in His blood and robed for heaven.

* *John vi. v 44.*

HYMN FOR THE NATIVITY.

Sing, ye angels of the morn,
 Sing this day the Virgin-born :
 Lo, at length the Prince of peace
 Comes His people to release.

Once ye sang* of heaven and earth
 Crown'd with beauty at their birth :
 Now let greater themes of joy
 All your heavenly harps employ.

Children all of Adam, rise,
 Join the chorus of the skies :
 Hark ! the heavens around us ring ;
 Hail the advent of your King !

Christ is born, the promised Word,
 Christ, our Priest, Redeemer, Lord :
 He whom hosts of God obey
 Comes in human garb this day.

Children of a fallen race,
 Glad the gift foretold embrace :
 Satan from his throne is hurl'd :
 Mercy smiles upon the world.

Once in gloom profound it lay ;
 To the powers of hell a prey.
 Sin the God-man shall destroy :†
 Welcome in the reign of joy !

* *Job, xxxviii., v. 7.*

† *1st John, iii., v. 8.*

Shine, thou sun, ye stars, retire :
 Light the heavens with purest fire.
 Nature, greet the Saviour-child,
 Blossom like the rose, each wild.*

Sink, ye hills, ye valleys rise,†
 Tower, ye forests, to the skies,
 Ocean, from thy deepest cave
 Pour in joy th' exulting wave.

Hell has heard the tidings glad,
 Hell through all her realms is sad,
 Awed she dreads th' approaching hour,
 Crush'd her triumph and her power.

Haste the Father's love to tell,
 How with man God deigns to dwell,
 And the Spirit in this Child
 God and man hath reconciled.

THE TEMPTATION.

Our great Redeemer taught us all
 The tempter how to fight :
 The world, the flesh, the devil fall
 Before His conquering might.

Sinner, if want thy troubles raise,
 Think then how Christ refrain'd
 From food, and fasting forty days
 Temptation He sustain'd.

The Flesh.

* "The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."—*Isaiah xxxv., v. 1.*
 † *Isaiah xl., v. 4.*

Do pride, ambition, grandeur lure,
 Christian, behold, thy Head
 Unmoved could hear of joys impure
 And turn to God instead.
 If Satan whisper as a snare,
 "The right way thou hast trod,"
 Presume not, but fall down in prayer:
 Tempt not the Lord thy God.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

Nailèd to th' accursèd tree
 Hangs the Saviour ! Sinner, see,
 This is what thy sins have done !
 Dost thou weep, or art thou stone ?
 All the curse of guilt descends
 On the sinner's best of friends,
 Concentrated woe unknown
 Piled on Him, on Him alone !
 Sin had reached its utmost height ;
 Man with God had dared to fight.
 Hosts of hell let loose in power
 By permission ruled the hour ;
 And that loving heart could bear
 All that fiendish hate might dare :
 This He freely did endure
 Man to rescue and secure.

Scourges, shame, the rulers' frown,
Wormwood, gall, the thorny crown,
Clamour of the madden'd crowd,
Lies and jeers and tauntings loud,
Base ingratitude, and pain,
Such as ne'er was borne again,
Turn'd not from His great design
Nor delayed the Man Divine.

Darken'd is the orb of day ;
Earth is quivering in the fray.
Of His sufferings what are seen
Are but glimpses of the scene :
Conflicts dire then raged within,
War with all the gods of sin,
Till the Lord of life and death
Bade depart His dying breath.*

* *John x. v. 18*

THE RESURRECTION.

I.

Times of triumph now are nigh ;
 Gain'd at length is victory !
 Earth convulsed hath felt the throes
 Of a birth she must disclose.
 Joyful at his Lord's commands
 By the tomb the angel stands ;
 The huge stone he rolls away,
 Rolling like a child at play,
 Easy as an infant boy
 Rolls across the floor his toy.
 Then thereon he takes his seat,
 And beholds before his feet
 Arm'd and armour, shield and spear,
 Prostrate thrown in panic fear.
 Vain their efforts to retire :
 Face like lightning, eye like fire
 Shot a terror through each heart,
 Terror words cannot impart—
 They as helpless as the dead,
 Quaking lie, before him spread.
 Human eye must not behold,
 Human tongue must not unfold
 What within that tomb is done,
 Known but to the Holy One.*

* The reunion of the soul and body of our Saviour was a fact which probably neither the eye nor the mind of man in their present state could comprehend.

II.

Far th' infernal hosts are fled :
Jesus rises from the dead !
Satan dares no more be seen
Near that grand, that glorious scene.
Victor o'er His hellish foes
From the tomb the Saviour goes :
That torn body ris'n and free
Chosen witnesses must see.
To the women, struck with dread
" He is ris'n," the angel said,
" He is not here ; fear not ye,
" Where the Lord lay, come and see :
" Quickly seek His friends and say
" That the Lord hath ris'n this day."
Hence they with great joy and fear
Run to tell each comrade dear ;
But before they tell their tale,
Jesus meets and cries, " All hail."
Welcome was the well-known voice,
Clinging to Him they rejoice :
Worship Him, and hold His feet,
And believe with joy complete.
" Would," He said, " my friends see me,
" Let them go to Galilee."

III.

On the road two brethren sped,
Musing on the loved One dead,
Two who trusted once that He
Israel from his foes would free ;
All their expectations now
Fell before that crushing blow.
While they then their doubts express'd,
Jesus join'd them and address'd.
Holden were their eyes and they
Did not know Him all the way :
But when told the cause of woe
Graciously He deign'd to show,
That the Christ foretold of yore
Must bear all they did deplore,
Ere He enter'd heaven again
And resumed His glorious reign.
Rapt and charm'd they Him detain'd
And to stay with them constrain'd :
Bread He took and bless'd and brake
Calling on them to partake.
Something in His words and mode
Him their much-lov'd Master show'd.
Recognition flash'd delight
Whilst He vanish'd out of sight.

IV.

That same hour those two return'd ;
For to tell their friends they burn'd :
Them they quickly found, and heard
How to Simon He appear'd.
In reply the two display
How He argued by the way,
And in breaking of the bread
Made it known He was their Head.
Whilst the brethren wondering tell
Of events they knew so well,
Jesus in the midst was seen
Rendering more perplex'd the scene.
Mild He labours to remove
Doubts and fears and kindle love,
With a look benign He stands,
Showing both His feet and hands.
"Handle me," He said, "and see,
"Flesh and bones belong to me :
"Spirits have not such as these ;
"Why be troubled ? Be at ease—"
Then He deign'd to take some meat
And before them He did eat.
Through their minds fresh wonder ran
While He ate and talk'd as man.

V.

Fully to their minds He brought,
How when with them He had taught
That all things must be fulfill'd,
Which concerning Him were will'd,
And by Psalms or Prophets old
Or Moses' ancient Law foretold.
Then their understanding He
Open'd and gave them to see
How to Him and none beside
Scripture words of God applied.
“Thus,” said He, “those words declare
“Fully what the Christ must bear :
“He must die, and as ye read
“Rise the third day from the dead.
“Then His people must make known
“Safety in His name alone,
“And to turn men from their sin
“At Jerusalem begin.
“All these things ye know full well,
“To the world these tidings tell.
“Lo ! I send the promise too
“Of my Father upon you:
“In the city now remain
“Till fresh power from heaven ye gain.

VI.

When to His disciples now
Jesus first Himself did show,
One call'd Thomas was away,
And saw not the Lord that day.
Those who saw, with one accord
Told him, "We have seen the Lord."
"In His hands except I see
"And feel marks of nails," said he
"And His side my hand receive
"Thrust in, I will not believe."
Eight days after came the Lord,
And held Thomas to his word.
"Hither reach thy hand," He cried,
"Thrust it too into My side ;
"Be not faithless but believe."
Thomas did the truth perceive,
Instant he his faith proclaim'd
And, "My Lord and God," exclaim'd.
"Thou hast seen Me, therefore thou
"Hast believed," said Jesus now :
"Blessed are the faithful few
Who believe, but not like you
"Have seen—their Lord." Thus in love
He the doubtful did reprove.

VII.

Cease, ye sceptics, cease your strife—
 Hail, triumphant Lord of life !
 With Thine own, Thy holy hand,
 Thou hast foil'd th' infernal band,
 And the pangs of death o'ercome
 Ris'n victorious from the tomb !
 Thine the triumph, Thine the might
 Endless bliss to bring to light.
 Thou dost to Thy ransom'd fold
 Heaven and deathless life unfold.
 Foes all cast beneath Thy feet
 Soon Thy conquests shall complete.
 Thee eternal joys await,*
 Thee all nations celebrate,
 Thee in every place and clime
 Men shall bless throughout all time,
 And when time shall be no more
 Magnify Thee and adore.
 Circling round Thy throne on high
 With the angels they shall cry,
 Cherubim and Seraphim
 Swell the everlasting hymn :
 Join Thy praises to proclaim
 And exalt Thy glorious name.

* "Shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied."—*Isaiah lii., v. 11.*

VIII.

Faithless men must still be found,
 Faithless though the truth abound.
 Their loved Lord the brethren see
 As was told in Galilee :
 And their faith still to maintain
 Jesus reappears again.
 Peter and his fishing crew
 All in vain their toil pursue,
 Till the Lord stood on the shore
 And ensured success once more.*
 Fishes many, great in size,
 Fill'd the net, a wondrous prize !
 Common was to all the thought,
 This success the Lord had brought.
 Peter plunged into the tide
 Quickly sought his Master's side ;
 Whilst the net his little band
 In their vessel drew to land.
 Soon then as they left the sea,
 On the shore a fire they see,
 Fish thereon and near some bread.
 " Come and dine," then Jesus said.
 None durst ask Him, Who art Thou ?
 Knowing He was Jesus now.

* A second time securing a large draught of fishes. Compare *Luke v., vs. 4 to 9*, with *John xxi., vs. 3 to 7*.

IX.

Love divine the banquet spread ;
There was fish and there was bread,
And a feast beyond compare,
For the risen Lord was there !
There was peace and righteousness
Glimpse of Eden happiness :
Looks of kindness and of grace
Beaming from that heavenly face,
Soft descending as the dew,
Comforted those chosen few.
Gladness, gratitude and love
In their hearts together strove :
Whilst to speak the brethren long
Awe restrain'd each eager tongue.
Holy silence reign'd around ;
Heaven-born joys the banquet crown'd.
Angels in that feast of grace
Might have coveted a place.
No contention them assail'd
Harmony with all prevail'd.
Each with ardour strove to please—
“Dost thou love Me more than these ?”
Jesus asked, he who denied,
Once his Master, now replied.

X.

“ Yea, Lord, I love Thee full well;
“ This Thou know’st and Thou canst tell
“ How I love Thee.” Then said He,
“ Feed my lambs, thus honour Me.”
Silently in awe they heard
Him they honour’d and revered ;
Nor presumed to speak their mind :
He their secret thoughts divined.
And again to Peter cried,
“ Dost Thou love me ? ” He replied :
“ Yea, Lord, I love Thee and trow
“ That I love Thee, Thou dost know.”
“ Feed my sheep,” then said the Lord :
All in silence heard the word.
Jesus ask’d again, “ Dost thou,
“ Son of Jonas, love Me now ? ”
Grieved was Peter, when said He
The third time, “ Dost thou love me ? ”
“ Lord,” said he “ Thou know’st all things,
“ Of our thoughts the secret springs,
“ What I feel I need not show
“ That I love Thee, Thou dost know.”
This spake he with bursting heart
Of his feelings to tell part.

XI.

Once again the Saviour said,
“ Feed my sheep,” and then He led
Peter’s thoughts to future time,
When with zeal and faith sublime
He should gladly life resign
In his Master’s cause divine.
“ Verily when thou wast young
“ Thou didst girt thyself, and strong
“ Whither thou wouldest walk, didst go,
“ But when age and time of woe
“ Overtake thee, then thy hands
“ Thou shalt stretch as far as bands
“ May permit thee undeterr’d ;
“ But another thee shall gird,
“ And indeed shall carry thee
“ Where thou wouldest not wish to be.”
Thus the Lord in mercy spake,
And foretold that for His sake
He a painful death should die
And his God thus glorify.
From his Master as it fell
Every word he markéd full well.
Jesus saw, then added He
One brief mandate, “ Follow me.”

XII.

Glory to our God rehearse,
Glory through the universe !
All was once divinely good :
Man in Holy beauty stood.
Heaven and earth in chorus rang,
While their Maker's praise they sang :
Love and joy and happiness
All their creatures did possess.
Envious soon the fiends of hell
Plotted, and their victim fell.
Now has Christ, the Lord supreme,
Triumph'd o'er th' infernal scheme,
And giv'n man in heaven a place,
Not by merit but by grace.
For this gift then from above
Of our heavenly Father's love,
And the Holy Spirit's aid,
By whose unction we are made
Children of the Lord most high,
Let us join in one great cry :
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Blessèd God, our Strength and Boast,
Holy, Holy, Holy One,
Peace is ours, our vict'ry won !

Thanks we give, O God of Heaven,
 Thanks for every mercy given.
 We owe all that we possess
 To Thy love and faithfulness.
 With Thy help Thee we will serve,
 And from Thee will never swerve.
 Thine for ever may we be
 Thine through all eternity !

THE ASCENSION.

The Saviour now must leave His chosen few :
 Blessing He stands, prepared to bid adieu :
 All that He came to do on earth, is done :
 God's wrath appeased and man's salvation won.

The clouds,* His chariot now attendant nigh
 Await His passage upward through the sky:
 Amazed, o'erwhelm'd, with mingled joy and fear
 The last few words His loved disciples hear.

Up in triumphant might the Lord ascends ;
 Each law of nature to his purpose bends ;
 His march sublime, as far as human ken,
 Is watch'd and witness'd by those wondering men.

And whilst they gaze all thinking of the sight
 Two angels come arrayed like men in white.
 "Why stand ye here thus gazing, thus intent ?
 Exclaim the two, "Ye see this great event.

"This same beloved Lord whom ye have seen
 "Go up to heaven from this terrestrial scene
 "Shall in like manner to this world descend
 "As ye have seen Him from this earth ascend."

* Who maketh the clouds his chariot : who walketh upon the wings of the wind.—*Psalms civ., v. 3.*

THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Obedient to their Master's word
Th' Apostles wait with one accord,
Assured that He in them would still
The promise of their God fulfil.

The sound as of a rushing blast
Sudden through all the building pass'd,
And seated upon each with awe
A tongue like as of fire they saw.

And soon the wondrous power was given
To know each language under heaven :
Words new and strange flow'd in apace
Converse to hold with every race.

O Holy Spirit, who didst thus
Bear witness for the Christ to us,
Still follow up Thy great design
And fill our souls with love divine.

Reveal to us that wondrous cross
That saves us from eternal loss ;
And teach the fulness of that plan
Wrought out by God for sinful man.

Show in the light of Jesus' face
The glory of the God of grace:
And grant that with Thy guidance blest
We in the Lord may ever rest.

SERMONS.

SERMON I.

ON THE LOVE OF GOD.

Romans, Chap. v., Verse 8.

But God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

THE whole religion of the Bible is comprised in a few words—the love of God. If we had that love towards God which were a fitting return for the love which God has shown towards us by giving His only Son to die for us, we should at once be good Christians and the very beings which it is the object of the Gospel of Christ to make us. We should make it our meat and drink to go about doing the will of our heavenly Father. Our conduct would be such as we see exemplified in the history of our blessed Lord. We should grow in grace : we should no longer be satisfied with the bare recital of an established creed, but we should be daily expatiating upon the greatness of our Saviour's love. It would be our constant theme. Is it not the case with the things of this world ? Upon what subject do men most frequently converse ? Assuredly upon that nearest their hearts. Look at the worldly-minded. How endless, how incessant is the conversation of some men upon the various methods of growing rich ! With what eagerness will others talk upon the gratification of some favourite appetite ! Others will discuss with equal ardour political subjects.

In fact, if we look at the world, we find the greater part devoting the principal portion of their time to subjects of a fleeting nature. And though they profess to love God, and renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, yet every one is running after his own favourite object and postponing the things of eternity to some season which he hopes will be more convenient. But while the ungodly world forgets its Maker, what is the conduct of that great and glorious Being ? For us, while we were yet sinners, Christ died. “God commended His love to us—that is, He confirmed, He established it,* He rendered it eminently remarkable, and gave the sure proof by giving up His only dear Son to die for us, the just for the unjust, and to suffer a cruel death that the honour of His justice might be satisfied, and that some portion of a ruined world might at all events be saved. In order that we may see the greatness of this love in some slight degree, I shall take occasion from the words of the text to consider in the first place the state in which mankind were before the coming of our Lord in the flesh ; and in the next place call your attention to what is our duty as arising from so great a blessing as the redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ.

Consider then, in the first place, what was the state of men when our Saviour condescended to come down from heaven, to take man’s nature upon him, be born of a virgin, lead a life of misery and ignominy, and at last suffer death, and rise from the dead, and go through all this for our sakes to make our peace with God the Father. What was the state of the world ? With the exception of the nation of the Jews, there was not a nation upon the then known

* Adhering thus to the meaning of the Original Greek.

face of the earth which possessed correct notions of the Deity. The world was sunk, with that solitary exception, in the grossest darkness. A great portion of the unlearned worshipped images made of wood or stone or metal, and these images represented as they thought the persons of their gods. The character of these gods or idols was such as any respectable individual amongst us would be ashamed to possess. They were described as giving way to the worst of passions. So blinded had mankind become that they even worshipped devils. They bowed down not only to stocks and stones, but even adored imaginary beings which it was supposed would administer to their own passions. It is difficult for you, my Brethren, who have been brought up in a Christian country to form any correct idea of such a state of things. But imagine for a moment the whole county of Warwick inhabited by a race of men who knew nothing of God, who had never heard of Jesus Christ, who in fact, as far as religion was concerned, did and thought what they liked ; who knew nothing certain about an after state, who came into the world they knew not why, and after this life ended would go into a state of which they knew nothing, but of which they continually heard the most dismal heart-trying tales, of which they continually heard that it was a state of utter never-ending darkness or misery, nay, that there was no hope, for they possessed no information about a Saviour, and they felt and knew that they were offenders against their own gods. Now picture to yourselves, my Brethren, the members of such a community dying and perishing without hope, without even any certain knowledge of the soul's immortality. See the son standing by the death-bed of his depart-

ing parent, neither party knowing whither to look for consolation in that trying hour of human agony, but looking forward, the one to enter upon a state of endless darkness, the other to continue for a short time in a miserable world and then to follow he knew not whither. Now, I ask, who can comprehend the debt which we owe to our God for having removed all this misery, for having put an end to the fears of His people, for having given us the Day-spring from on high, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of His people Israel ? We have but very, very faint ideas at the best of times of the debt, the immense debt due to our God through Jesus Christ. With what transports would the greatest men of ancient times have hailed the glad tidings of a Saviour's birth, and the reconciliation of God and sinners ! Even the most highly learned and enlightened before the Saviour's advent, generally speaking, had no correct notions of God, if we except the Jewish people. Many, it is to be feared, did not believe in God at all, or at all events in the gods set up before them. They no doubt saw the folly of the greater portion of mankind in making gods of stocks and stones, and therefore grew callous and indifferent, if not disposed to treat the subject altogether with contempt. With such views of religion it is not to be supposed that their morality was of a high order. What would be the morality of the greater portion of the populace in this country if all restraints of religion were removed ? If they neither believed in heaven nor hell, what would many persons do ? If no punishment in an after state awaited the perjured, the liar, the profane, it is to be feared that the state of society would be worse than it is now. Accord-

ingly we find that after mankind had long forsaken God, from father to son, for many generations, God at last gave them “over to a reprobate mind, being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity.” Thus lived the great mass of mankind, yielding themselves slaves to divers lusts and passions—And mark, my brethren, the reason which the Apostle Paul gives for their being in this wretched state. It was because they did not like to retain God in their hearts, “*when they knew God they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their own imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.” The fathers forsook the worship of the true God ; the sons trod in the steps of their fathers, and grew worse and worse, till the whole world was filled with violence and nothing short of the blood of the incarnate Son of God was able to wash out the increasing tide of iniquity and sin. At such a time and in such a state of things came forth the Saviour. When the evil became desperate, when a whole world was sunk in ruin without hope, when millions were perishing and passing rapidly into eternity with no knowledge of salvation, when the blood of bulls and of goats was unable to atone for so great, so universal a departure from God, when thousands of burnt offerings and thousands of rivers of oil were utterly insufficient to wipe out so foul a blot, when all the created beings that could be found in heaven, earth or hell could afford no sufficient sacrifice to appease the offended justice of God, and without that justice being satisfied, man could not be forgiven ; when the case of us all miserable, fallen,

guilty creatures, was thus desperate and forlorn, the Lord Jesus Christ freely offered Himself, and like the ram caught in the thicket, when Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac, was offered upon the altar of his heavenly Father, instead of that being whose sin had called forth the rod of Divine justice. Here then was love, love such as created beings can never comprehend. Angels may chant its praises, men may wonder and adore, but created intellect sinks under the greatness of this love, under the contemplation of a redemption wrought out for undeserving sinners, wrought too by the Son of God manifest in the flesh, and suffering death in the likeness of man! But if we cannot comprehend the depth, the vastness, the unsearchableness of that love which drew the Son of God from heaven, and led Him to endure so much for us, at least let us not forget our duty arising from a proper sense of this love. What then is our duty in return for such mercy so undeserved on our part? In the first place there can be no proper return for love but love. And as God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life, we need not hesitate who ought to be ever uppermost in our hearts as the object of our love. Now if we believe in the Son of God with an acceptable faith, if we believe with the heart unto righteousness, our belief will have its due influence on our daily conduct, and we shall set forth our love to God and the Saviour by setting forth the glory of God and studying to do His blessed will in all things. Unless we do this it is in vain to profess that we have any correct sense of God's love, or any love in our own hearts towards God. God is a searcher of the heart, and therefore remem-

ber, brethren, that it is to no purpose to profess to be Christians, to profess to believe certain doctrines which we find in our Bibles, unless they produce a proper effect in our hearts. "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" said our blessed Saviour, and these words are still as forcibly addressed now as they were then, to every unrepentant and unbelieving sinner. If you believe that Jesus Christ has died for your salvation, that He has done great things and shed His blood for your redemption ; if you believe all this and show no desire on your part to avail yourselves of the high privileges which result from these benefits, then as to the salvation of your souls, you are no farther advanced than if you simply believed any other historical fact. Pray to God to convince you that you must have a saving faith. Without this you will have no love in your hearts towards God. You will be at enmity with God and God with you. Now you cannot yourselves convince your own hearts but God has promised the Holy Spirit "to †reprove" or convince you "of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." And if you seek Him earnestly He most assuredly will be found. He will shed abroad His love in your hearts, and give you that peace which a justified soul only can know. But for all this God will be asked. And why should you be unwilling to ask Him ? He is full of loving kindness, tender mercy and compassion. He is more willing to hear than we to pray. He remembered us in our low condition. He did not give us over to our cruel enemy, the devil, to that lion that is daily seeking to devour us. We might, in strict justice have been given over to everlasting torments,

* Luke vi., 46.

† St. John's Gospel ch xvi., v. 8.

to suffer with the devil and his angels ; we might have been consigned over to everlasting misery on account of the sin of our great progenitor Adam, and then again, on account of our own sins, had not the Saviour undertaken our cause. But the Almighty and ever blessed Ruler of the universe did not thus abandon us. Oh no ! He rescued us ; He sent His own son to seek and save those that were lost. And with such an unparalleled proof of God's love and mercy shall we hesitate to ask Him for the largest portion of His grace to help us to draw near and avail ourselves of His goodness ? Oh no, my dear Brethren, let us draw nigh unto our God, remembering that He is a God of mercy. Let us plead the inestimable merits of His own dear Son. Let us bear in mind every moment of our lives that He is just the very God that such miserable sinners as we are stand in need of. He proclaims Himself as such. Look at His own description of Himself in the 34th chapter of Exodus and the 6th verse. "The Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." This is the Being to whom we are required to call and entreat His assistance, that He will give us that faith which will be acceptable in His sight. And had we that love which becomes our profession as believers in His dear Son, it would be always a more delightful occupation to be praying for an increase of faith and means to be enabled to set forth His glory than to be so perpetually engaged in the transitory pursuits of an unsatisfactory world. I lay a stress upon this love, an

immense stress, because, if we were properly under its influence we should possess every other Christian virtue. We should love our neighbour, and be ready to assist all our fellow-creatures if we believed in and loved God as we ought to do. We should keep His holy commandments if it were the wish nearest to our heart to please Him. In all our dealings and in all our daily conduct we should consider before we did anything, whether what we were about to do, would be in accordance with His blessed will and glory. But do we regulate our lives according to this view? Do we not profess to believe that God is omnipresent, and that His eye is everywhere, and yet are we not continually doing things in secret, which we should not wish a fellow-creature to see; nay, we should be ashamed even of a child seeing what we sometimes do: and yet God sees and knows all and will remember all and bring up all again in judgment against us, if we be not cleansed by a lively faith in the blood of Christ Jesus. But how can we presume to lay claim to that faith, if we do not His will? Can he who slanders his neighbour, can he be thought to love God and obey His commands? Can the lewd, the intemperate, the drunken, the worldly-minded, the man who seizes every opportunity to indulge his covetousness, can such a character as any one of these be said or thought for a moment to believe in or love God as he ought? As long as we are engaged in the things of this world, many of us can act with some consistency, but as soon as we enter upon the things of eternity, it is wonderful to observe the inconsistency of most men. In our baptism, if we are infants, by our sureties we renounce the world, the flesh and the devil. When we come of age

we take this engagement upon ourselves. But do we keep it? With the world we trifle, we run after it instead of running from it, we seek its pleasures, we court its idle and short-lived pursuits. With the flesh we tamper. We pander to its vile passions and indulge its inordinate desires, as long as strength and health are allowed to us. And as for the worldly-minded, they hold a sort of parley with the devil, they halt between two opinions, listen to his vile suggestions, and consider whether they cannot by some scheme of their own serve God and mammon, though God who cannot err tells them in His unfailing Word that they cannot.* Now this is the conduct pursued by the many, but can they be thought to have the love of God in their hearts? Is such conduct worthy of beings to whom God Himself has commended His love and given the most astonishing proof by sending His only Son to die for us while we were yet sinners? Oh, let us have a care that we be not found among such a faithless and perverse generation. This love upon which I discourse so much, you cannot yourselves procure, but as I have already said, you can ask of God and He has promised to give faith to them who seek Him in the right way. And if you have real faith, it will produce love. Make the trial, brethren. But remember that you are not to ask with a faint heart, as though you were asking a neighbour for a thing which you cared not if he refused. No, you ought to ask with greater eagerness than you ever asked for anything this world can produce. You are not to ask for a gift that will last for a day, but for eternity. Your immortal soul is at stake, and it depends upon your obtaining a saving

* Matt. vi. 24.

faith, an interest in Christ and love toward God in your hearts. Now would you not ask, yea, cry to a man for mercy, if you knew that the law of the land gave him power to take away all you had from your wife and children and throw you into prison to-morrow, there to remain till your death? There are many who would cry for mercy if they were in such a strait. Now, then, show the same anxiety for your souls, brethren. Cry to God for mercy, who has not only power to kill the body but to destroy both body and soul in hell. Cry to Him that He may send His Holy Spirit and create in you new hearts, renew your souls after the Divine image, and make you to rejoice far more in the things of heaven than ever you rejoiced in the things of time and sense. Cry to Him that He may be graciously pleased to shed abroad His love in your hearts, that you may not only hear and read of the blessed Jesus dying for your salvation, but that you may know Him to be the way, the truth and the life; that He is indeed your Saviour, able and willing to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. Then indeed you would love Him, you would see a beauty in Him for which He is to be desired. This is your duty arising from a proper sense of God's love towards us, of that love which the text tells us, He "commended to us," that He pointed out to us as eminently great, and of which He gave us a proof by sending His Son to die for us while we were yet sinners. And be sure, my dear brethren, to give God the glory both of your salvation and of every good thing in which you may by his rich mercy be in any way concerned. Remember that it was God's love to us, not our love to Him that

may be considered as the moving cause of our being saved at all. And now “*we love Him because He first loved us.” Be sure to bear in mind this important point and give God all the glory. The devil and your own hearts will unite together to deceive you and beguile you with pride if you are not watchful in prayer to God for the assistance of His Holy Spirit. You will feel a temptation within you continually to make your case appear a little better than it really is, and that you are not quite so great a sinner as God’s Word tells you, or the minister who preaches that Word declares you to be. But listen not to such suggestions. Humble yourselves continually, and acknowledge your unworthiness of God’s great mercy through Christ. Throw yourselves entirely upon the inestimable merits of Jesus ; plead His all-sufficient righteousness, sufficient even to cover your sins, if you repent before it is too late and turn to God with all your hearts. Humble yourselves thus, my dear brethren, and look not for a moment at any fancied merits of your own, but trust entirely in the merits of Christ and live a life worthy of your Christian faith. And then know for a certainty that God will most assuredly be with you. Though He inhabits ~~te~~ternity, though He dwells in the high and holy place, yet He condescends also to dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. **May** God condescend to come and make our hearts the temples of His Holy Spirit and lead us to life everlasting, for the merits and for the sake of His only dear Son Jesus Christ our Lord.—**Amen.**

SERMON II.

ALL ENCOURAGED TO COME TO CHRIST.

Luke Chap. xv. Verses 1, 2.

Then drew near unto Him all the Publicans and Sinners for to hear Him. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, this man receiveth sinners and eateth with them.

THE Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is just such a Gospel as it becomes God to give and man to receive, admirably adapted in every point of view to the dignity and greatness of the one, and the necessities and weakness of the other. Its consistency too in every respect both with itself and the dispensation given by God to His ancient people proves it to come from the great Fountain of truth and light. When the Lord made Himself known to the Children of Israel He proclaimed Himself as "Merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Such is the description given by Himself in the Ch. xxxiv. vs. 6, 7 of Exodus. Again, the Lord says by His Prophet Ezekiel* "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right he

* Ch. 18, v. 27.

shall save his soul alive." And in the same merciful spirit so encouraging to the repentant, we read of our Lord receiving Publicans and Sinners and eating with them. Let us, by God's help, endeavour to draw strength and encouragement in our Christian profession from the contemplation of this circumstance, and while strengthening ourselves let us learn from our Lord's example to be willing to receive all who come unto us for the benefit of their souls and give them to the best of our power the help they require. We will first direct our attention to the circumstance mentioned in the Text, and afterwards found such observations upon the teaching of our Lord as may, I trust, be applicable to us.

May the Holy Spirit direct our minds to a right understanding of this portion of Holy Writ, and to such meditations as may tend to His glory and may be profitable to our souls.

At the time of our Lord's Ministry upon earth, the Jews, like most other nations of the then known world, were under the government of the Roman people. They were in fact a conquered people, and obliged to pay to the Romans their conquerors whatever taxes were imposed upon them. Their country in consequence swarmed with tax gatherers, who were called publicans or collectors of the public revenues. No doubt some of these people rendered themselves odious to the people at large by demanding money from them, and probably in some cases by extorting more than what was justly due, even according to the decrees of the Romans. However they were held in abhorrence by the Jews, who though they were under the Romans still were unwilling to think themselves bondsmen, but prided

themselves in being Abraham's children and never in bondage to any man. Under this impression they very naturally associated Publicans with loose and disorderly persons, who did not adhere strictly to the law of Moses and were otherwise guilty of wicked courses and therefore are called Sinners. At this time also existed a sect remarkable for their austerities and the assumption of more than ordinary sanctity, who called themselves Pharisees. With these associated another class of persons called Scribes, who were the teachers and expounders of the Law of Moses and were counted men of the most learning. But these men, though formerly there had been Scribes of great learning and piety, had in our Saviour's time sadly declined both in their doctrine and practice, and accordingly we are told by our Lord that except our righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees we shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

These men were constantly seeking occasion to annoy our Lord, or to degrade Him in the estimation of the people, and seeing that in His great mercy He had condescended to receive even Publicans and Sinners, and to teach them the way of life, instead of giving God thanks and rejoicing as they would have done, if they had either the glory of God or the welfare of man at heart, they made the circumstance a ground of accusation against the meek and merciful Jesus. They in the pride of their hearts, fancying themselves so much holier and better than the rest of mankind, had studiously avoided all such company. Though they had little of the reality of religion in their hearts, they had or wished to have much of the appearance of it in their outward deportment, and anxiously courted the

praise of men rather than of God. Not a little were their wonder and envy excited when they beheld the Lord, instead of adopting their proud contemptuous views, willing even to open His arms to perishing sinners. They saw Him followed and admired by the people, and looked up to as a Teacher of righteousness, and as a Pattern of all holiness, and as they aspired to that character themselves they thought that He should act as they did, and keep the profane multitude at a respectful distance. But not such was the Spirit of the blessed Jesus—No! His direction was, “Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice.” His command to all men was, “Return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon you, and unto your God and He will abundantly pardon.” Yes, even the vilest sinner is invited to turn from the error of his ways, and to seek the Lord his God. The Redeemer of mankind would not, like the proud Pharisee, pass by even the wicked and lost soul and leave him to perish in despair, but held out the prospect of salvation even unto him if he would but turn from sin. This was the particular recommendation of the Gospel—this made it “Glad tidings of great joy to all people.” He Himself particularly observes that he came not to call the righteous, that is, a righteous world, to repentance but sinners. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. The Pharisees thought themselves sure of going to heaven and despised others, who, they thought with equal confidence, would be shut out of the Kingdom of God. But our blessed Lord would have all men to come to the knowledge of the truth, and would not lose the least lamb of the flock, would not expose to peril the meanest soul, but would cordially receive even

sinners into favour. It must not be thought that our Lord took the Publicans and Sinners, whilst they persevered in the continual commission of sin, as his daily companions. If he had done so, doubtless the Pharisees and Scribes would have had reason to express their astonishment. Persons of like taste generally associate together, and it would have been strange indeed, if He who was free from all sin and was continually warning everybody against the commission of sin, should yet have made notorious sinners His principal friends. But nothing of this kind is even hinted at. Deeply as they were opposed to our Lord and His divine teaching, yet even the breath of calumny never dared to insinuate that He encouraged sin in others by countenancing them who lived in the daily practice of sin. But He did encourage even profligate sinners to come to Him, and learn of Him, for He was meek and lowly and came to seek and to save them that were lost. This no doubt was very offensive to the self-righteous Pharisees and stirred up their malice and envy, especially when they saw the effects of His ministry; when they saw that though they would not listen to the truth, others, whom they had despised were open to conviction and turned from the ways of sin to the paths of righteousness. When they beheld Matthew, whom so many knew to have been a Publican, and Zaccheus, whom they knew to be the "The chief among the Publicans," when they beheld these men formally so devoted to the care of this world's wealth, suddenly changed in mind and habit, no longer setting their affections on things below but on things above, they must have seen that there was a very great alteration. If they would not confess that God was in them of a truth, if they were

wilfully blind to the fact that such was the fruit of the Ministry of the blessed Jesus, no doubt others would perceive, as we find they did perceive, that "Never man spake as that man." The fact was plain, the fact was notorious, that Jesus had already converted some, and this circumstance together with the admiration of the multitude and the amazement caused by his miracles, stirred up that spirit of envy and malice, which we find so often manifested itself and embittered the course of our blessed Lord. They could not humble themselves to confess, that they were wrong, and that He was right, and therefore, though it does not appear, that they found any fault with His doctrine or principles, they vented their spleen against the Teacher "Laying wait for Him and seeking to catch something out of His mouth that they might accuse Him."* From the contemplation of this subject let me draw some observations which may with God's blessing prove useful to us.

The conduct pursued by the Scribes and Pharisees as described in the Text is too much like the conduct pursued by many in these times. They will neither enter into the kingdom of God themselves nor let others enter. Instead of assisting the ignorant and them that are out of the way, they will even murmur at those who are willing to assist them. Instead of assisting a fellow sinner to teach others the errors of their ways, they will find more satisfaction in finding out his faults. How pleased are some people if they can but hear of or see a Minister of religion doing anything wrong ! How will they talk about him and harp upon his sinful conduct, forgetting perhaps that he is but a sinner like themselves. Instead of bearing with one another's

* Luke Ch. xi. v. 54.

failings and uniting in one grand effort to forward the cause of true religion, it is to be feared that we are all, by our corrupt nature too much inclined to find out the faults of any one, who shows more than ordinary zeal for the salvation of souls. But such conduct is exceedingly displeasing in the sight of God. It is in fact to side with the great adversary of God and Man and expose perhaps to danger the soul of our brother, whilst we give way to our own foolish prejudices and corrupt desires. Of this our Lord cautions us in the parable of the lost sheep which immediately follows the word of the Text. Instead of leaving those who are inferior to us in opportunities and knowledge to perish in their ignorance, we should study to be more like the blessed inhabitants of heaven, who are described as rejoicing over "one sinner that repenteth." Our Lord reasoned with the people bringing forward two ordinary circumstances that might happen to many persons. If a person who had sheep lost one of them for some time and then found it again, would he not be greatly delighted ? If a woman who had a certain number of pieces of silver lost one of them, and after diligent search found it again, would she not greatly rejoice ? So also ought we, if we are the children of God, to rejoice like "The angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." We read in the Gospel of St. Matthew, Ch. xii., v. 20, "A bruised reed shall He not break and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory."* This proverb exemplifies the meekness as well as the mercy of the Saviour. The tender conscience of one who is heavy laden with the burthen of sin, is like the bruised reed.

* See Sumner on St. Matthew, Ch. xii.

The Pharisees would have broken that bruised reed : those who complained to Jesus that he ate with Publicans and Sinners ; those who esteemed themselves righteous and despised others, would have rejected the first advance of a returning prodigal. For this was one of their offences, “Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men ; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.” But the character of Christ was to “Bind up the broken hearted, to set at liberty them that are bound ;” to say to the contrite, “Go in peace ;” and to the penitent, “Thy sins be forgiven thee.” So, likewise, when flax is smoking, a gentle breath may fan it into flame; a drop of water will extinguish it. Such is the feeble spark of grace in the heart ; soon may it be checked and made ready to expire by the language of severity and haughtiness ; but if encouraged, it may increase to genial warmth and vivid light ; may come to be “Seen before men,” brightly burning in the service of God. Despair would be the drop of water and quench the smoking flax : hope would be the gentle breath which revives and nourishes. And the words of Christ are words of hope ; “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

Let us learn from the subject brought forward in the Text the evil and danger of prejudice. Doubtless among the Pharisees and Scribes as among most other bodies there were persons who, if they gave themselves time to think with unprejudiced minds must have seen the folly and wickedness of their conduct. There must have been some, no doubt, who if they had taken time to consider, must have seen how unreasonable was their behaviour.

Instead of taking time to consider the subject calmly and impartially, they took up certain views respecting our blessed Lord and themselves, and acted upon them in the most rash and bigoted manner. Instead of coming to get all the good they could from the discourses of our blessed Lord, they seem to have come for the express purpose of finding all the fault they could. Oh, my Brethren, let us beware how we give way to such dangerous dispositions. Instead of coming to church or the school to find fault, let us endeavour by God's help to get all the good we can, and minister to each other to the mutual edification of all the members of Christ's mystical body. In the blindness of their fury and prejudice these Pharisees it appears did not find fault with the sin but with the person. Had they confined themselves to expressions of detestation of sin they never could have found occasion to "murmur" against the Lord Jesus, for He knew no sin ; but losing sight of this as too many to do in our days, they gratified the malice of their minds by railing at and murmuring against those who were not as haughty and self righteous as themselves.

Lastly let us derive encouragement from the conduct of our blessed Lord. Consider, my dear Brethren, who it was that allowed these Publicans and Sinners to draw near unto Him. It was the Son of the Most High God, the Lord of Lords and King of Kings. It was He to whom "Every soul should bow of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth." Yes, it was the Lord of Glory, "The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Here was condescension—He who was filling heaven and earth with wonder and delight condescends to allow Publicans and

Sinners, even those persons who are looked upon as outcasts by their fellow worms, to draw near unto Him and received from Him the bread of life. Yes, as He himself tells us, He came for this very purpose, "To call sinners to repentance," that "whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."* And He is still willing to receive sinners, even us, who have trifled so long on the brink of eternity. Shall we then be indifferent to such mercy? Not only is He willing to receive us but He actually like the shepherd searching for the lost sheep, or the woman for the lost piece of silver, follows us by His Spirit, and suffers us not to go down into the jaws of destruction without making continued efforts to rescue the work of His hands. Resist not the strivings of the Spirit. Turn not a deaf ear to the voice speaking to you through His word. Draw near to the only Saviour, like the Publicans and Sinners, and in the full assurance of faith, seek at His hands that doctrine which under the influence of His blessed Spirit may prove "a well of water springing up into everlasting life."†

Now to God the Father, &c.

* St. John's Gospel, iii. 15. † St. John's Gospel, iv. 14.

SERMON III.

ON FAITH.

St. John's Gospel, Chap. iii., Verse 18.

He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

THAT all men were sinners against laws human and divine, that all had gone astray from the faith of righteousness was a fact generally admitted both by Jews and Gentiles in ancient and modern times: but how they were to be reclaimed, how they were to be brought back to a position which constituted even in their estimation a state of righteousness was a matter full of difficulty and perplexity. The wisest of the heathen could see the existence of the evil, but could not point out a remedy for it. Some indeed flattered themselves that repentance and amendment could be sufficient to justify them before God, but this was a wrong conclusion. They erred from imperfect notions of real justice or from an inadequate idea of the greatness of the evil with which they were beset. Their amendment in itself was no atonement or satisfaction for the sins which they had already committed. The not continuing to increase a debt does not diminish the debt already incurred. Besides, they had no security against the recurrence of the same misery. The case of all men in itself without a Divine interposition was become utterly hopeless. The promise of a Saviour so deeply cherished

by the holiest of men was the only ray of hope in a benighted world. In the fulness of time the only begotten Son of God, the Lord Jesus, foretold by Prophets, prefigured by types, attested by miracles, came to make a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction, once offered for the sins of the whole world. He came to seek and to save them that were lost, them that without His help were irretrievably lost. He came to make peace between man and God whom man had offended,—to deliver him from the consequences of breaking God's law, from sin, from Satan, an evil world, death and hell, by the price of His blood shed for him, by his obedience and suffering, and by means of the enlightening and sanctifying influence of His spirit. But these blessings are only to be obtained by those who receive Him as He requires them to receive Him, by those who believe in Him and put all their trust in Him. The salvation of man is altogether a work of faith or belief from beginning to end. Without revelation we should have never known that there was such a person as the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. And it must appear reasonable to every one who considers the subject with an unprejudicial mind, that to obtain the blessing which we seek at the hands of any one, we must believe him to have the power of conferring that blessing. To obtain an interest in the high and mighty privileges which Christ offers to us, we must however do more than simply believe in Him in the ordinary acceptation of the word. I propose, therefore, in the first place to show what it is to believe in Christ.

2ndly.—What it is to reject Christ.

3rdly.—That the truth of Christ's mission is attested

by every kind of evidence that a reasonable man can desire.

And lastly, I will endeavour to point out some signs by which we may ascertain if we have a faith which is acceptable in the sight of God.

May God by His Spirit guide us into all truth, and prosper these meditations to His glory, and the benefit of our immortal souls.

To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ so as to benefit our souls is not merely to assent with the understanding to the fact that such a person does really exist, but to receive Him and rest upon Him as our only Saviour, as the Being upon whom alone all our hopes of eternal happiness depend. It is to look to Him as that gracious Redeemer who is in every respect preeminently excellent, necessary and suitable for all the wants of fallen man. It is to betake ourselves to Him as our only Saviour, through whose redemption and mediation we can only have reconciliation with God, and hopes of glory. To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with a saving faith, is not merely to admit the truth of his incarnation, sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension, but to consider and receive Him as the second Adam who came to repair the fault of the first Adam. It is to own Him as our Daysman and Redeemer, our next of kin in whom the right of redeeming us from sin and death is vested ; as perfect God and perfect Man. It is to acknowledge Him as our Head, our great Protector against the adversary of our souls and bodies ; it is to look to Him as our Prophet, Priest and King. The faith or belief which is acceptable in the sight of God is not to be obtained by the strength of our reason, or by argument drawn from the evidences of the Christian Religion : it is the effect of a

Divine operation upon the soul of man : it is a principle or habit wrought in the heart by the Spirit of God taking of the things of Christ, and shewing them unto us, and so acting upon us that under His Divine influence we are enabled to find all that we require in Christ ; that by Him we are redeemed, justified, reconciled to God, and that finally through Him our salvation is completed. Such is the blessed state of true believers in the Lord Christ. "He that believeth on Him is not condemned," is not condemned during his sojourn in this present state of existence, nor will be condemned at the great day of final account. High and holy privilege ; far higher in value than any sublunary treasure, but too little prized by the most grateful of God's dear children ! No wonder would it be to us, if we duly appreciated this divine gift, that such a noble list of saints and martyrs as we read of in the XI chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." True believers in the Lord Jesus cannot fail of their reward. Though many may be their trials, though dark and dreary may be their passage through this life, yet they will remember that it was through much tribulation that their mighty Saviour entered into glory, and that through Him, they also, in God's good time, shall be more than conquerors.

On the other hand, the misery of those persons who reject Christ as their all-sufficient Saviour, cannot be too strongly described. The hopeless state before God into which they bring themselves who will not look to Him for

salvation, who will not believe in Him as perfect God and perfect man, as the Christ, the anointed One of God, who hath by the inestimable value of His sufferings made a perfect satisfaction for sin, and is able to save all that come unto Him for salvation, is indeed dreadful. They reject the counsel of God against themselves ; they voluntarily shut the door of hope against themselves ; they are in fact in a worse situation than the unenlightened heathen, of whom it was said they had no hope, and were without God in the world. They, I say, are in a worse state, inasmuch as they change the truth of God into a lie, and crucify the Son of God afresh by putting Him to an open shame. If then, according to the law of God as promulgated by Moses,* “ He that despised that law died without mercy under two or three witnesses ; of how much sorcer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace ? And everywhere in the Gospel the greatest stress is laid upon a full unshaken belief and dependence upon the merits alone of Christ. When our Lord gave the commission to His Apostles to go and preach the Gospel to every creature—Mark xvi. v. 16. He added “ He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” We are expressly told “ He that wavereth must not expect anything of the Lord.” So objectionable is the unbeliever in the sight of God that he is classed in the Book of †Revelation with the “ Abominable and murderers and whoremongers and sor-

* Hebrews x. 28, 29. † Rev. xxi., 8.

cerers and idolaters and liars, who shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death," And when St. Peter, for fear of the Jews, was inclined to allow the Jewish ritual to be mixed with the pure Christian faith as a means of salvation, St. Paul stood up and reproved him openly, declaring the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as the only method by which man could be reconciled to his Maker and saved from eternal ruin. The want of this true unadulterated faith in Christ lies at the bottom of all our failings as Christians. The absence of that vital principle in our hearts leads us to act continually in a manner inconsistent with our profession. He who is a true believer in Christ, is one with Christ. In the emphatic language of Scripture, he is in Christ and Christ is in him. But the very moment he sins, he is no longer in Christ. His faith fails, and unless by His Holy Spirit Christ strive with him and arrest his failure he will continue to fall. But that blessed Saviour is always watchful over those who are His, and will not suffer the Adversary to pluck them out of His hand. He is always ready to stretch out His hand and sustain them when they cry like Peter, * "Lord save me." His Holy Spirit will renew their faith if they but return and repent. He will show them that the charity of Jesus never faileth. If we have fallen, if our faith has been shaken, yet if we turn unto the Lord and seek Him, with an honest and good heart He will have mercy upon us. If we have ever so little faith, if it be but as a grain of mustard seed, yet if it be of divine origin, it shall remove mountains; all our lusts shall be slain, all our passions subdued, all our fears dissipated, and in

* Matt. xiv., 30.

due time faith shall be turned into sight, and hope into enjoyment.

A pure and unfailing trust in the Lord Jesus Christ being thus absolutely necessary for our present and future welfare, we shall do well to bear in mind some points which, under God's blessing, may tend to strengthen and confirm our faith. The Almighty, in great mercy, has given us reason, and we are to use this reason in subser-
vience to His will and glory. We are answerable for the right use of this as well as for the right use of all other talents. He does not require a belief in the great fundamental doctrines of our religion without giving us such testimony to their truth as ought to satisfy every inquiring and well-directed mind. And though our faith to be acceptable in the sight of God must come from God, and not be the mere result of reasoning about the evidences of Christianity, yet those evidences are given for our use, and doubtless for the confirmation of our faith. I purpose, therefore, in the next place to point out some of them. The evidences which I propose to bring forward may be classed under the three heads of "Prophecy," "Types," and "Miracles."

The prophecies respecting the Messiah extend over a very long space of time, some of them having been delivered thousands of years ago. They were numerous, entering often into the most minute particulars some of them before they were fulfilled apparently contradictory to each other ; and they were multiplied in the providence of God, in order that when the true Messiah did appear there might be no reason for doubting His divine mission. Now, all of these prophecies, of which the time for their

fulfilment has come, have been fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in Him alone. And we have every reason to suppose that those which yet remain to be fulfilled will meet with their completion in and through Him at the proper time. Of the many prophecies which have been already fulfilled time will not allow us to mention many. A few must suffice on this occasion.

Immediately after the fall of Adam it was predicted by God of the Messiah, that He should bruise the head of the Evil Spirit, and that the Evil Spirit should bruise the heel of the Messiah. Accordingly, turning to the New Testament, probably 4000 years after the promise had been given, we find that our Lord did bruise the head of Satan, overcoming all his temptations, and though the Evil Spirit did bruise His heel, when our Lord suffered, and at last died on the Cross, thereby paying the penalty due to sin, yet our Lord eventually triumphed gloriously over death and the grave, by His Resurrection, and in His Ascension led captive both His enemy and ours. And though our Spiritual Adversary is still struggling, and our Saviour's triumph may not be considered complete till the number of His elect be perfected, yet His triumph is not the less sure. The principal power of our Enemy is broken by our Saviour's death and sufferings. His head is bruised by the Son of God, and in the fit season his works will be destroyed and overruled to the glory of God.

Again it was predicted that “*The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come.” Now until the coming of Christ in the flesh the Jewish Government possessed considerable

* Gen. xl ix, 10.

authority, but not long after His crucifixion that authority was abrogated. And before one generation had passed away according to His express prediction Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jewish state subverted. For 1800 years the Jews had been scattered over the face of the earth, destitute of sceptre and lawgiver. Hence it is undeniably inferred against the Jews that our Lord Jesus is He that should come and that we are to look for no other.

It was foretold that the Messiah should be both God and man. Isaiah speaking of Him describes Him as “*The Child born, the mighty God, the everlasting Father,” And Micah says that “† His goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” Corresponding with these predictions we find it recorded in the New Testament that “‡ Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne O God is for ever and ever;” that “§ God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ;” that “|| The Word (viz. Jesus Christ) was with God and the word was God;” that “¶ The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us;” that “**He is God over all blessed for ever.” These are a few of the leading particulars in which we find an exact agreement between the prophecies and history of our blessed Saviour. If we had time to go more minutely into those particulars that agreement would appear infinitely more striking. If we read in the prophecy of Zechariah that †† they weighed for His price thirty pieces in silver, in the Gospel of St. Matthew we find Him betrayed for that very sum. ‡‡ If Isaiah §§ predict that He should be numbered among the transgressors and yet His grave should be among the rich,

* Isaiah ix. 6. † Micah v. 2. ‡ Psalm xlv. 6 and Heb. i. 8.
 § Acts ii. 36. ‡‡ St. John i. 1. ¶ St. John i. 14.
 ** Rom. ix. 5. §§ Zechariah xi. 12. †† St. Matt. xxvi. 15.
 §§ Isaiah iii. 12.

in the Gospel we read that He was crucified between two thieves and yet buried by the rich man, Joseph of Arimathea. And so might we go on to enumerate numberless other minute circumstances, did time permit, all of which exactly agree and meet in the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet never were found to suit the character of any other individual among the countless children of Adam. But our Saviour was not only foretold in prophecies, He was equally foreshown by types.

A "Type" has been defined to be an example, pattern, or general similitude or likeness to a person, event, or thing which is to come. In the Scriptures we find typical persons, as Adam, Abel, Noah, the Levites, High Priests, and others ; also typical things as Noah's ark, Moses' burning bush, the brazen serpent ; and typical institutions as the law given by God to Moses, as well as typical places, typical seasons and typical purifications, all of which pointed to Christ or His Church, as the great Antitype. Our Lord Himself has taught us to apply these things to Him. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." This he spake prophesying of his own death by being lifted up on the cross. And as the Israelites escaped death from the flying serpents in the wilderness, by looking to that brazen serpent erected by Moses, even so must we escape death, eternal death, by looking to Christ and trusting in Him as the great Antitype. It is not possible to contemplate the paschal lamb, or the scapegoat, or indeed any of the sacrifices or oblations as ordained by God, it is not, I say, possible to contemplate them and see any meaning in them worthy of their great Author, without having our thoughts led by the Spirit

of God to Christ and seeing Him prefigured by them, and confessing Him as the end of the law for righteousness to believing sinners.

Again our faith may be confirmed by the contemplations of our Lord's miracles. To this testimony our Lord appealed—*“Though ye believe not me, believe the works,” said our Lord. “The works that I do bear witness of me.” Even the very Jews themselves bare testimony to his miracles. It was plain when they charged Him with casting out devils by Beelzebub, they at the same time confessed the truth of our Lord's assertions, that such wonders were performed. The Jews in fact are perhaps the best witnesses to the truth of our Lord's miraculous powers. Such was their hostility to His views, such their enmity to the Messiahship that He proposed to them, that we cannot suppose anything short of the deepest conviction could bring them to assent to the truth of His mission. And yet we find that many convinced by His works believed that God was in Him and that He came from God. But His enemies, though often against their own prejudices convinced and confounded, were as full of enmity against the truth as ever, because they strove with the Holy Spirit and had not that enlightening help without which the Gospel of truth is preached in vain.

That we, my Brethren, may not be numbered among that rejected class, let us examine ourselves whether we be in the faith. We may profitably inquire whether we have the fruits and signs of faith. If we have real, genuine Christian faith we shall show forth that faith by our lives. Our conduct will be conformed to the precepts and doctrines

of the Lord in whom we believe. In vain shall we say, Lord, Lord, if we do not the things which he commands. If we have the love of Christ in our hearts, we shall live to Christ, we shall be constrained by that love to prefer Him before all. We shall thus argue, *“That if one died for all, then were all dead, dead unto sin, having no longer any love, any interest therein, and that He, the blessed, the only Redeemer, died for all, that henceforth they might live unto Him. By Him we must obtain the sanctifying influence of that Holy Spirit who alone can make us meet to be partakers of that redemption which he has wrought out for us. By that Holy Spirit our hearts must be opened and “The eyes of our understanding enlightened.” By that Holy Spirit we must be enabled to see Christ as fairer than ten thousand and altogether lovely. By that Holy Spirit “Christ must be formed within us,” we must “put off the old man,” our natural corruption, and “put on the new man, which is created in righteousness and true holiness,” after the image of Him that made us. But to obtain the help of that Holy Spirit we must seek Christ’s assistance earnestly in prayer. We are invited to do so. †“Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you.” And let our lives correspond with our prayers. This will be the best proof of the sincerity of our prayers. God grant that this may be the privilege of every soul here present for the merits and sufferings of Christ Jesus our Lord and only Saviour.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, &c.

* 2 Cor., v. 14. † Matt., vii. 7.

SERMON IV.

WATCHFULNESS ENFORCED.

(Preached for the Bible Society towards the end of 1869.)

St. Matt., Chap. xxv., v. 6.

At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh ; go ye out to meet him.

INCLINED as we all are by our fallen nature to banish from our thoughts the idea of approaching death, we cannot be reminded too often of that great change, which, sooner or later awaits every one of us. And at what season can our minds be more appropriately turned to this solemn subject than at the end of one year and the commencement of another ? In looking round this little church I see many pews no longer occupied by faces well known to us. Those individuals whom I rejoiced to see not long since in this House of God have left their mortal bodies in the grave, but gone in the soul to that awful tribunal before which also we all must soon appear. And what an astounding change will then be ours ! Those who are found in Christ, reconciled to God through Him, and prepared for the mighty change will be welcomed to the realms of eternal happiness, will be admitted into the glorious company of saints, will be associated with the great and godly of old time, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the children of God recorded in Holy Scripture. Those who are unregenerate,

unforgiven, unreconciled to God, dying impenitent, unrenewed, hardened in sin, will sink into the abyss of unutterable woe, will swell the number of lost souls, and be the companions of damned spirits, of Satan and his angels. What a contrast! Happiness unspeakable on one side, misery unimaginable on the other! Now the object of the parable from which my text is taken, is to carry on the subject with which the preceding chapter concludes, namely, that of the last solemn day of retribution, and to call our attention to that great event, and to warn us of the necessity of being always prepared for it. But as many may think the day of judgment still distant, I think it better to press upon you that, individually, it may as far as our souls are concerned be very near. The day on which a man dies is to him the day of judgment, as far as his soul is concerned. His mortal body is left to decompose on earth, but his soul goes to God and is happy or miserable according as he is found prepared or unprepared for his departure hence.

You may think the difference between the state of the saved and the state of the lost greater than it ought to be. This then shall be a point for our consideration. May God the Holy Spirit direct our minds, and fill us with true wisdom and enable us to form a correct judgment.

The saved are in the parable represented by the wise virgins; the lost by the foolish virgins. The bridegroom is the judge.

The wise virgins represent the saved. They are people of prudence who look forward to the future, who act upon the principle so earnestly inculcated by our

blessed Lord, who deny themselves, who will not for the sake of a little present pleasure follow the devices of their own hearts, or listen to the suggestions of the devil. They are people who have duly considered what they ought to be, who have counted the cost, and have also considered what the heavenly Bridegroom has a right to expect from them, and what manner of people they ought to be in return for all his love and goodness.

*They are looking for His second coming ; they come to wait upon the Bridegroom when he appears, and in the mean time to wait for him. It was the wisdom of the wise virgins that they took oil in their vessels with their lamps. They had a good principle within which would maintain and keep up their profession. The heart is the vessel which it is our wisdom to get furnished ; for out of a good treasure there good things must be brought. Grace is the oil we must have in this vessel. Our light must shine before men in good works ; but this cannot be, nor will it last long, unless there be a fixed active principle in the heart, of faith in Christ, and love to God and our brethren, from which we must act in every thing we do in religion.

They are called wise virgins. Those only are truly wise who think about their souls and live for eternity ; who tread in the steps of their Saviour, bear their cross and despise the shame ; who have their affections set upon things above, and not upon earth ; who look by faith to what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, but what God hath prepared for them that love Him.

* Henry and Scott's Commentary Matt. xxv. p. 152.

These have always their lamps ready ; they have not to hurry forth and buy oil at the eleventh hour. They may be taken by surprise but still their oil is at hand. *Those that would be saved, must have grace of their own. Every man shall give account of himself, and therefore let every man prove his own work.

The foolish virgins represent the thoughtless part of mankind ; those who live only for this world ; those who think only about this world, or are most anxious about this world. Such people are short-sighted, unwise, and may be well represented by the foolish virgins, for what can be more foolish than to neglect to prepare for what they all know and must acknowledge will inevitably come upon them, death and all its terrible realities ? The foolish virgins only took oil enough to make their lamps burn for the present. So the worldly wise lay up what they think will serve them for this world. They themselves know full well that their hardly-earned and much-loved wealth cannot avail them in their journey through the valley of the shadow of death. But this they drive from their thoughts altogether. The devil helps them, and little effort is required on their part to get rid of the uneasy idea. He whispers that they have no reason to trouble themselves on that point. Nor does he find that this mode of action suits the rich only. He tells the poor too that they have enough to think of without giving themselves unnecessary anxiety about an hereafter of which they know nothing. Thus are the foolish virgins easily made the victims of their own folly and their souls' adversary. They have oil enough to keep up an appearance—their lamps burn for a time. The

* Henry and Scott's Commentary p. 153, Matt. xxv.

foolish and the wise virgins all formed one company, and went together to meet the Bridegroom. To mere lookers on, who were not close observers, they would probably appear all alike. But how different in reality they were, the result will show us. The foolish had only oil enough to last for a little time.* They lacked that principle that would enable them to bear hardships as true soldiers of Christ. They were not prepared to take up their cross and follow Him. They were not willing to deny themselves; to surrender all up from love to Him, from gratitude for all the good that He had done unto them. They bore the lamp of open profession, and were willing to stand well with the world, but not to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil so completely as to be born again, to be His children, to live for Him, and to know no will but His. This is a state they cannot yet bring themselves to—oil enough they have as they think for the present, but as for the future, of that they have no clear idea of what is to be done, but they hope for the best. At all events they will not make themselves miserable by thinking much about it. Thus you see, brethren, there is a mighty difference between the children of God and the children of the devil; between the children of light and the children of darkness; between the heirs of heaven and the slaves of hell. There is more difference than there is between a barren and a fruitful tree; between a land flowing with milk and honey and a sterile desert, for the difference between the children of God and the children of the devil is in their hearts. In the one the heart is a

* Henry and Scott's Commentaries, p. 152.

treasure of all that is good ; in the other the heart is the fountain and seat of all that is vile and degrading.

Wonder not then that when at midnight there was a cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh;" only the wise virgins went in with Him. And oh ! what a tremendous difference was here ! What was the state of those admitted ? What was the state of those shut out ? No tongue can describe the blessedness of the one, or the misery, the shame, the degradation of the other. We may conjure up all the ideas of happiness, all the things which human beings are apt to consider elements of joy and glory, we may call to mind the beauty of Eden, the garden of the Lord, the river of God, the glorious landscape, the magnificent scenery, the peace, the contentment, the pure pleasures of heaven, the uninterrupted serenity of angelic spirits, and above all the illuminating presence and reconciled countenance of the Lord God Almighty, and all will fall short of that unspeakable bliss which the wise virgins will possess. We are expressly told, that it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive the things that God hath prepared for those that love Him. And turning to those excluded, what will be their state ? If we can form no correct conception of the blessedness of the wise virgins, we are equally unable to have any full or adequate idea of the misery of the foolish virgins. I can suppose for instance what " weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth" may be ; or what a lake burning with fire and brimstone may be ; or what the smoke of torment may be ; or what the blackness of darkness may be ; or what the " gnawing of the worm" may be, though in the view of their eternal duration I am utterly lost. But when

I have amassed all these terrible images together, and carried them to the utmost stretch of severity which my mind can conceive, have I arrived at any adequate notion of what the death of the soul really is ? or can I by all those figures put together, with the addition of all that revelation contains upon the subject, and the multiplication of all that my imagination can frame, can I form anything like a just idea of the deep and deadly miseries of a lost soul, when it has entered upon its eternal doom ! Alas ! I cannot ! Its lamentations are unutterable ; its woes inconceivable ! The Scriptures have indeed told us that it is not within the grasp of man's heart to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, but this declaration is not accompanied by any similar one respecting the things prepared for them that rebel against God ! This latter truth seems to be too self-evident to require any positive assertion. That inconceivable glories should be prepared for even the least of such unworthy creatures as we are may well surprise us ; and we may well require the infallible word of Jehovah to assure us of it. But that woes unimaginable should be the portion of obstinate sinners is only a necessary consequence—a just and reasonable supposition, which needs nothing to confirm it, for the end of their doings is evidently death.

To guard you against such an awful doom, to help you in some degree to escape from such a dreadful catastrophe I have purposely brought before you this solemn subject. At midnight was the cry, "Behold ! the Bridegroom cometh." At that time when many were asleep, many looking forward to repose, many thinking that

nothing else was to be done but to prepare for rest ; at that time so unexpectedly came the cry. We read in the 5th verse of this 25th chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel that "while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. The wise as well as the foolish virgins slumbered and slept. The first we will hope in the exercise of faith, prepared with their lamps and oil, all ready waiting for their Lord ; the foolish, thoughtless, lazy, sleepy, indifferent, not prepared, not expecting their Lord so soon and so suddenly, and while they went to buy, we read that "the door was shut." They were excluded, they were shut out for ever. They brought upon themselves that rebuke, "I know you not." How soon may this be the fate of one of us ! Alas, how soon ! The object of this interesting and beautiful parable was evidently to prepare us, to put us on our guard. Our Lord says "Watch." "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh." We ought to be in a constant readiness and preparation to meet the Bridegroom, because we know not the hour of his coming to judgment ; nor yet, which will be of the same consequence and concernment to us, do any of us know the precise time of our own death. Either of these may happen at any time, and come when we least expect. It behoves us therefore to make the best and speediest provision that we can for another world, and to be continually on the watch and to trim our lamps, that we may not be surprised by either of these events, our own particular death, or the general judgment of the world. More particularly should we take up an immediate and effectual resolution, not to

delay our repentance and the reformation of our lives, that we may not have that great work to perform at a time when we are not fit to do anything, much less to prepare for eternity, and that in a few minutes, which ought to have been the care and endeavour of our whole lives. Surely, brethren, if we do not wish to be numbered among the foolish virgins, we should have that ordinary foresight as to avoid being forced at last to go through a hurried, imperfect, and perhaps unavailing repentance. Surely now, while our day of grace is prolonged, we should bend our whole mind and all our thoughts to accomplish as well with our feeble powers as we can do, that great work which requires our best endeavours, our utmost abilities, our wisest and most deliberate thoughts. For this purpose fail not every day to seek at God's hands the help of His Holy Spirit for Christ's sake. Make this always a leading object in your prayers, morning and evening. One of the wisest and most polished of ancient heathen writers said, that the whole life of a philosopher, that is of a lover of real wisdom, should be one continued preparation for death. This he said unenlightened by the beams of Gospel light. If the wisdom of such a step pressed thus weightily upon his mind, groping in the darkness of heathenism, how forcibly ought it to strike us, enjoying as we do by God's rich mercy the full benefit of the Gospel dispensation!

Let me urge you then, my dear brethren, to let slip no opportunity to make this preparation on your part more perfect. Seize every opportunity to show your gratitude to God, your devotedness to your Saviour, your love for His service, your desire to set forth His glory. For this reason come forward willingly, freely, generously, and sup-

port that noble institution for which I am commissioned to plead this morning. If ever there was a time when this Society ought to be supported that time is now, when attacks of the most insidious and malignant character are made both within and without the National Church upon that Word of God contained in our blessed Bibles, that Word upon which the Protestant Church of England was founded by our saintly Reformers. To me, brethren, seeing how the Church is divided within itself and how even those who ought to be its best supporters, who eat the bread of the Church and enjoy its honors and dignities, and yet either find fault with its rites or ceremonies, or change them and adulterate them with their own fond conceits and upstart notions, to me seeing all this, it is a subject of great thankfulness, that the British and Foreign Bible Society has become so rooted, so firmly established in this country, that under God, all the machinations of man and the devices of the devil himself cannot upset it. Considering the changes that from time to time are made in our religious establishments under the sanction of Government, considering the state of the public mind, the instability, the love of change, the everlasting craving after something new, and the schemes of science falsely so called, it is to me most gratifying to reflect that there exists a Society having for its single object the circulation of the pure unadulterated Word of God. And when I call to mind that blessed assurance of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against His church, I am comforted also with a well founded hope, that this Society, come what changes may in Church and State, shall still be a fountain of

blessedness to this Protestant country, and present a strong barrier against that torrent of infidelity, love of novelty and misdirected learning which threaten to bear down all before them. Now one might well deem it a privilege to take part in sustaining such a Society, so widely wanted, so useful not only in distributing the bread of life to millions, but even in helping to maintain the Protestant institutions of this favoured country. I call upon you then, brethren, nobly and liberally to respond to the call made upon you this day. You are, I trust, so well acquainted with the work of this Society that I need not much dwell upon it. I will however mention a few particulars. This Society is now more than 64 years of age. It was founded at a time when I fear there was even less real religion in the world than there is now. This Society has struggled on from that time to this, at first having as usual many difficulties to encounter but strong in the promises of the Lord and confident in that Word of which He was the author, it has gone on through years increasing and increased, and even if possible presents a stronger claim for support than it ever did. It may in fact be considered as the first of all religious Societies—the handmaid of all other Missionary organizations and those evangelizing agencies which are the true glory of England. The more error prevails (and it surely prevails enough in these times), the more urgent ought we to be in circulating the Scriptures and supporting this Society, because error can only be effectually destroyed by the light of Divine truth. As Popery went down before the Word of God at the Reformation, so also will all the agencies of evil

eventually succumb to it. Of this we have had a remarkable instance in Spain lately. Ten years ago 10,000 bibles were printed in Madrid, the capital of Spain, but the government would not allow them to be circulated. They were eventually sent to Bayonne, and when Queen Isabella passed through that city, in her flight from her own kingdom, these bibles were immediately sent into Spain, and were circulated throughout the country. In Madrid, portions of the Scriptures have been sold in the open street, and hundreds of them purchased. In France, not only working men in blouses, but men of great scientific attainments have visited the Depot of the Bible Society, and evinced great anxiety to become acquainted with the Scriptures. The work in France has been greatly encouraged by the preaching of a celebrated young Roman Catholic Priest, known as Father Hyacinthe. He has given a stimulus to the desires of the people, and has made them most solicitous to be acquainted with the Bible. This feeling has begun to be more manifested in action, and during the past year, 113,000 copies of the Scriptures have been sold in France. Even by the Bible alone, without the aid of the ministry, the most astounding results have been brought about. I heard years ago of much good being done in Ireland by a Bible being dropped accidentally out of a carriage. In an Island thousands of miles from this spot, called Savage Island, which name was given to it by Captain Cooke, as I suppose from the savage manners of its inhabitants, they have been so changed entirely by the transforming influence of the Gospel, that the name is no longer applicable. In Mada-

gascar, the greatest cruelties were inflicted on the native converts, yet the Gospel triumphed. The Missionaries were at one time driven out by persecution, but the Bible was left behind, and on returning in happier days, they found it had been silently doing its work in their absence, and they were gladly welcomed on their arrival by the Christian Church.

It is our lot to live in an age when all the world is thrown open to a great extent, and we may push the Word of God into the most distant lands. Let us imitate the Angels of God who came as at this time to announce the birth of a Saviour. Let us lay hold of present opportunities, and encouraged by past successes, show by our energy and zeal that our love for our blessed Redeemer has not cooled. Years ago there was in Leek churchyard and there may be such an inscription still as the following :—

As I was, so be ye;
As I am, ye shall be;
That I gave, that I have:
What I spent, that I had:
Thus I end all my cost;
What I left, that I lost.

Ah, brethren, “That I gave, that I have;” “What he left, that he lost.” It is even so. What is given to the poor is lent to the Lord and He shall repay it. If you would have any benefit yourselves after you quit this world from your worldly wealth, apply it now to some good purpose, while it is called yours. Soon it will belong to some one else unless you use it now. Let the effect of your good deeds be felt after you have quitted this world. Think what the Lord of Glory hath done

for you. Think how as at this time He assumed your nature to rescue you from eternal death. Think how "for your sakes* He became poor that you through his poverty might be rich." Think of these things, and your hearts must be harder than flint itself if you can in your covetousness grudge a few pence for His service and for the circulation of "That Book, which has God for its Author, salvation for its object, and truth without alloy of error for its matter."

* 2 Cor. viii., 9

SERMON V.

THE DETESTABLE NATURE OF PRIDE.

Proverbs, Chap. xvi., Verse 18.

(Preached towards the end of 1870, on behalf of the Sick and Wounded in France.)

Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

HISTORY is full of facts which bear testimony to the truth of this declaration. One instance of very recent date will be remembered by many for some time. This was the conduct and bearing of the late French Government and the French nation when on the eve of declaring war against Prussia. Now that the result of their wicked attempt has turned out disastrous, as usual with people who have no fixed and religious principle, they mutually blame each other. The Emperor pleads necessity—that he was compelled by the power of public opinion in France to go to war. The French nation through their present Government repudiate all desire for war and lay the blame on the captive Emperor. There can be no doubt that both the French people and their Emperor deserve most justly to be very severely reprobated and condemned. It has been well said that the plea of necessity is the devil's plea. Pontius Pilate would no doubt say that for fear of an insurrection he

condemned the blessed Saviour to a violent death. If the Emperor of the French had not been influenced by selfish fears either for himself or his dynasty, he could, with the magnanimity becoming that character of the philosopher, which at times he seems to have aimed at, have quietly told the French people that he for his part would not be implicated in such a gigantic crime as an unnecessary attack upon a peaceful neighbour, and that if they were determined to engage in such an impious war, he would, if they wished it, abdicate and retire from France. But it is to be feared that neither he nor the people in France who joined in the clamour for war, were at all influenced as they ought to have been by the ordinary principles of sound morality, much less by the divine principles of Christianity. Yet they scrupled not to look up to God for His blessing—so grievously will, even men of education and who aspire to guide others, deceive themselves.

If we look at ourselves we shall find numberless instances of pride being either the ruin of many or the disturber of their happiness. Pride even seems to have led to the overthrow of the fallen angels. "Men would be angels, angels would be gods." Many who are ambitious to be thought philosophers wish to know and even profess in some cases to find out the origin of some things which really cannot be clearly ascertained. Some would find out the origin of sin. Want of faith appears to have been the origin of sin, as far as is known to us, but whence arose want of faith or weakness of faith. There I should say, stop! Curb a licentious curiosity. From want of faith arose pride, and this is

a most potential weapon in the hands of our great adversary the devil. It was partly by pride that he wrought upon Eve to taste the forbidden fruit, that she and her husband might be as gods, knowing good and evil. That we may be prepared against his snare let us look—

- 1st. At the evil of pride.
- 2ndly. At the folly of pride.
- 3rdly. At the detestable nature of pride in the sight of God. And
- 4thly. At the victory of humility and the glorious example of the meek and lowly Jesus Christ.

And may He by His Spirit be present with us and guide us into all truth, to the honor and glory of His holy name. Amen.

“Pride,” says Solomon, “Goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” I said at first that history bore testimony to the truth of this. Not only does history attest its truth but all the world around us. Pride cast down a “*Third part of the stars of heaven.” It led Satan to rebel against the God of heaven. Satan fell and by means of pride seduced our first parents and so “†brought death into the world and all our woe.” Now if you would have any idea of the evil of pride look at its consequences. What mind can conceive the misery, the anguish, the infamy caused by sin already in this world, and the unspeakable retribution that awaits it in a future state? Imagination cannot put limits to its dreadful results. No tongue can adequately describe them. Ezekiel speaking of the sins of one small nation,

* Rev. viii. 12 and xii., 4, 7, 9. † Milton’s Paradise Lost Bk. I, line 8.

says that on the roll of its history were written “*lamentations and mourning and woe.” This is the account given of one small nation in his own time by Ezekiel. But who can attempt to describe all the calamities endured by the human race through sin, that is, through pride. The unhappy Queen of Scots long since said that “An ocean of tears would not suffice to bewail the miseries of man.” Look at the sorrow, the pain, the anxiety, terror and anguish endured only during the last five months in France alone; all to be traced to pride. And what a small part does this constitute of the misery that it is now causing at this time in the world! This is but a glimpse, a bird’s eye view of the enormous evil. But perhaps one of the most distressing features of the subject is the sad reflection that all are suffering under this evil. It begins even in the cradle and never ceases till its victim has reached his death-bed. And this is true of all, however unwilling we may be to receive the unpalatable assertion. Not only the highest, but the lowest in the land; not only the oldest, but the youngest; and not only those who in the first flush of health and in the enjoyment of everything that can make this world delightful, give way to the glozing tempter, but even the most afflicted, the most helpless are, if we watch them closely, still hugging the delightful delusion, and unwilling to confess their wretchedness and utter unworthiness. Pride will often hover about the pillow of the dying man and whisper to him of deeds well done, and suggest many fancied claims to God’s favour, instead of his relying solely upon the infinite merits of the

* Ezekiel ii, 10.

blessed Saviour. The blindness, the infatuation inflicted on our unhappy race by the great adversary of God and man, through the instrumentality of pride, would be incredible, did we not see it written as it were with a pen of iron upon everything in this world in which we take part as agents.

But let us glance at the folly of such delusion. This will appear if we consider how groundless are the conceited imaginations of people. What is man, the greatest man that ever lived, the greatest sovereign, the most sublime philosopher that ever walked the earth? Dust! "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." And in a very short time the dust of the monarch cannot be distinguished from the dust of the peasant. The very name Adam means red earth, because he was supposed to be formed of red earth. "*What hast thou," saith the apostle, "that thou didst not receive?" Is it human grandeur that thou art proud of? Look at the mighty of old times! Look at Egypt!—look at her pyramids. Where are the builders? Their bodies are gone to their native earth. The names of some are not even known, and even to this day, after much learning and investigation, it is still disputed by many for what purpose even they were built. Look at the famous towns of antiquity—Nineveh, Tyre, Babylon, Jerusalem and others. Some so overthrown that it is even questionable where they stood. Look again at the great conquerors of antiquity, from the days of Chederlaomer to the beginning of the Christian era. These baubles of the ungodly world, these scourges of mankind have

* 1 Cor. iv. 7.

“sown the wind and reaped the whirlwind.” In that magnificent chapter of Isaiah, the fourteenth, the king of Babylon, as one of the mightiest of mankind, is represented as being received in hell by the shades of those departed monarchs whom he had trampled upon when on earth. “All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we ? Art thou also become like unto us ? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen, Lucifer, son of the morning ! How art thou cut down to the ground which didst weaken the nations !” Such is human grandeur, the highest state that falls to the lot of man, and such its end. As says the author of Ecclesiastes “*It is all vanity and vexation of spirit.” Do riches feed thy pride ? “†He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity.” Do you presume upon your beauty, your health, your strength or bodily accomplishments ? Alas ! Remember these are but for a season at most; even if for so long, only for youth and middle age and then “Come the evil days, in which thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.” Is wisdom thy delight and dost thou plume thyself upon much knowledge ? “I gave my heart,”‡ said the wise man, “To know wisdom: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow.” The wisest and most learned of mankind have often been the humblest and felt their inability and ignorance more

* Eccles. ii. 11. † Eccles. v. 10. ‡ Eccles. i. 17, 18.

than the unlearned. Sir Isaac Newton, one of the loftiest intellects of modern times, after all his wonderful discoveries in astronomy and abstruse subjects, declared that "He knew nothing." So deeply did he feel his weakness and insufficiency to grapple with the causes and nature of the laws by which this material world is governed. How many like Absalom have through their pride and arrogance been consigned to an early tomb! When that self-denial so continually inculcated by our Lord in the Gospels has been overlooked, and the proud spirit of the human heart indulged, it has often carried men into the most incredible absurdities, till at last, "The fool hath said in his own heart, there is no God." With this horrid saying ringing in our ears, let us look at the detestable nature of pride in the sight of God.

There are various kinds of pride. Pride peeps out in all possible ways and assumes innumerable shapes. There is the pride of affected humility, the pride of religious presumption, of pretended piety and ostentatious charity, and endless modifications of the evil—as many in fact as the Prince of Deceit and Father of Lies himself can invent; but all are detestable in the sight of an all-seeing and all-wise God. Before the Flood, when God saw that "every imagination of man's heart was only evil continually," it is plain that the purposes and desires of his heart were proud and ambitious; hence we read that the earth was filled with violence. "Whence come wars and fightings?" asks the Apostle. "Ye lust and have not." This is all the work of pride. Dreadful wars are the consequence. The *sword, as we

* *Ezek. xiv., 17.*

are assured, is one of the instruments by which God punishes mankind when their pride and their sins call forth His indignation. Who can fail to see this in recent events? On the very same day, the 15th of July, in 1870, two gigantic sins were committed—one by the Emperor of the French, and the other by the Pope of Rome. One, from motives of ambition, declared a causeless war against a peaceful nation; the other, in the pride of his heart, assumed one of the prerogatives of the Almighty—Infallibility. Where now are both these deluded men? The Emperor is now a prisoner of war in Germany; the Pope, stripped of temporal power, is not much better than a prisoner in his own palace in the Vatican. Infallible as he impiously presumed to be, all his worldly sovereignty lies prostrate in the dust. In every age, from the Fall of our first parents to the present hour, God has branded the pride of man with marks of His displeasure. It was pride that led to the confusion of languages. * “Go to, let us make a name and build a tower whose top may reach to heaven,” said the foolish builders of Babel. God frustrated their presumptuous design and scattered them on the face of the earth. The detestable nature of pride in the sight of God may be seen in the terrible results which have arisen from it. It hardened Pharaoh’s heart to such a degree that he would not set at liberty the people of God, till the prosperity of his kingdom had been utterly destroyed. And long would be the list of monarchs, if I could give it, who, in the indulgence of their ungodly ambition, have brought their dominions to the brink of

* Gen. xi, 4.

ruin. Many, especially in these times, think themselves at liberty to form their own opinions how their religion should be regulated. But all this savours of unhallowed pride, and unless their opinions be formed in a spirit of humility and prayerfulness, they themselves, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and looking principally to the Scriptures, it is to be feared that their conduct will bring upon them a rebuke instead of a blessing. In the 8th chapter of Deutronomy we are solemnly warned to keep a guard over our thoughts, and not incur the displeasure of God by yielding to a lofty imagination. “*Beware,” wrote the venerable Lawgiver of the Jews, “That thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping His commandments, lest when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied, then thy heart be lifted up and thou forget the Lord thy God. And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.” To those who give way to their own fond conceits and think that they can judge best how God should be worshipped, I would recommend the frequent perusal of the parable of the Pharisee and Publican, as it is recorded in the xviii. chapter of St. Luke’s Gospel, “Every one,” said the meek and lowly Jesus, “that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” See then the victory of humility.

†“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” This has been literally verified, many times. Many who have not sought human greatness, have had

* Deut. viii., 11. † St. Matt. v., 5.

greatness thrust upon them. It was so with Joseph in Egypt, who was raised from a prison to a throne. It was so with Moses, who was so meek and distrustful of his own powers, that he showed a sinful want of faith when called to deliver his people from Egyptian bondage. He evidently was very unwilling to enter upon so great an undertaking, and felt the inefficiency of his own abilities to grapple with the difficulties of it, till encouraged and confirmed by the promises and assurances of Almighty God. Even then, he required the help of his brother Aaron, as a spokesman. It was so also with David, who was raised from the humble duties of a shepherd's boy to be the Shepherd of God's people. Piety and humility were the brightest jewels in his crown. *“Who am I,” exclaimed the grateful king, “O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in Thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come.” †Solomon, his son, in his better days asked God to give him, not riches and honour, not the death of his enemies and the extension of his kingdom, but an understanding heart. And this was acceptable in the sight of God, who gave him not only the wisdom sought, but riches and worldly grandeur. But leaving all minor stars, look at our glorious Emmanuel, the perfection of humility itself. To Him are given all the ends of the earth. He, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the blessed and only Potentate, when “He took upon Him to deliver man, did not abhor the virgin's womb. He became incarnate, and walked the earth in

* II Sam., vii., 18, 19. † 1 Kings, iii., 9.

human flesh. In this lowly form He went from city to city, from village to village, accompanied by a few obscure followers, for the sole purpose of enlightening men and saving their souls. He was literally a "root out of a dry ground." There was no form nor comeliness in Him, nor any beauty which would attract the attention of the rich and mighty on earth. While the rulers of this world were revelling in luxury and ivory palaces, He, the Lord of life and death, had not where to lay His head. He seeks not the great and noble in the land, but the poor, the mean, the ignorant and helpless. "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not," said He, "for of such is the kingdom of heaven." "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." He never tires of doing good. He never repels anyone for his unworthiness. Finally, he is led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers He openeth not His mouth. Twelve legions of angels are at His command, but instead of resenting the indignities inflicted on His sacred body, He prays for his murderers. He bows His holy head and dies. His soul enters Paradise, and thither followed it the soul of the converted thief. If any one can reflect upon these solemn truths and call to mind that all this suffering was endured for his sake, and still remain unhumbled before God, his must be a hardened heart indeed.

O brethren, let us often call to mind the misery which our Lord endured for our sins, to make an atonement for them, to satisfy the offended justice of God, to pay the penalty due to God's justice for the sins of the

world, and let us under a deep sense of our unworthiness, humble ourselves in the dust, cast down all high imaginations, and seek, with all humility and gratitude, forgiveness and redemption at God's hands for Christ's sake. Let us abhor the pride of the human heart, which in the hands of our great spiritual enemy has been the cause of so much sorrow and wickedness in the world. Let us most willingly and cheerfully hasten to tread in the steps of our blessed Lord, and obey that precept, to love others as He loved us. Greater love cannot be imagined than that which the Redeemer showed for our fallen race. The greatest and brightest acts of charity ever exhibited by the human race are as nothing compared with His love. They shine with less splendour than the meanest tapers in the rays of the meridian sun. Still we can imitate His acts of beneficence, His unwearying kindness, and His unselfish philanthropy, and it is our duty as well as our privilege to do so.

Unhappily at this time we have a very pressing and strong claim upon us, calling for the fullest exercise of benevolence and liberality. In France, us you all no doubt know, during the last few months many thousands of men have been killed and wounded in the war, which is still raging. Of those who survive their wounds there are still many thousands. Of these some are still suffering severely, and I grieve to add that the small skirmishes that are almost daily occurring, constantly add to the number of the wounded, so that it is to be feared the number of sick and wounded still continues and is likely to continue to be very great. We are happily free from such a dreadful visitation, for which mercy we cannot be

too thankful to Almighty God. One way in which we can show our thankfulness is, by contributing to the wants of our afflicted brethren, and helping those who suffer from the calamities of war. Your aid to-day is asked for this purpose. It will be I suppose sufficient for me to state this much, and leave the whole in your hands. It cannot be necessary for me to go into the particulars of this awful war; not to harrow your feelings with details of the dreadful sufferings caused by it. The Daily Papers, from their number and cheapness, are so placed within the reach of all, that I have no doubt most, if not all, know enough to convince us of the sad and pressing necessity of doing all in our power to alleviate such devastation and misery.

Both the parties concerned in this war, both the Germans and the French have complained, as we might expect they would do, of our not sympathizing more earnestly, if not in fact siding with either party. This is what we might have expected, but there is no doubt we have taken a right course in maintaining a strict neutrality. Both parties have sinned. Both are suffering the consequences of their sins. It is through the rich mercy of God our part to overcome evil with good. The best answer we can give to their complaints of our want of feeling and indifference is, to send them help abundantly and promptly. The hundreds of thousands of pounds sterling sent for their help in the hour of their direst necessity is the best proof that we are not indifferent; that we feel for their calamities, pray for them and sympathize with them in the true spirit of Christianity.

SERMON VI.

GOOD WORKS NECESSARY.

Gal., Chap. vi., v. 7, 8.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

God has given us certain unchangeable laws by which we are to be guided in our doings. If we do such and such things, we know by experience that such and such things will follow. There may be sometimes a variation, at least in appearance, from the general rule, but still the general rule holds good in most cases. Industry generally has its reward—idleness its misery. The farm of the active husbandman abounds with plenty, that of the sluggard is too often a scene of wretchedness in his own eyes. He who is prudent and thoughtful saves himself many an hour of care and anxiety. He who never thinks till compelled by actual necessity pays the penalty of his thoughtlessness, and is continually in difficulties. So it is with things spiritual. He who only lives for this world lays up for himself things that can only benefit him in this world. When he goes out of this world none of those things profit him. He brought nothing into this world, and nothing can he carry out. His then is a wretched state. He is in the condition of that person described in the 19th chapter of St. Luke,

who having received a pound made no proper use of it. But how different is the lot of him who has made use of the talents committed to his charge, who hath attended to the duties of this life and sown unto the spirit. He, too, according to the immutable law appointed by God reaps his reward, everlasting life. Every advantage is his. The worldly-minded is obliged to leave behind him all those things upon which his mind doted upon earth—those things are left to others, some of whom probably he knew nothing of, but the works of the good man belong to him even after his departure from this world. “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”—Rev. xiv., 13.

May the Spirit of God be with us and put into our hearts that which may spring up to life everlasting while we proceed to consider the words of the text.

The Apostle, before he wrote the words of the text had been suggesting that every man should prove or examine his own work, that he should be careful not to think himself something when he was nothing, that he should have cause for rejoicing in himself and not in another: that every man should bear his own burden, and be willing to give or communicate to him that taught him, that is to the ministers or teachers of God’s word, and then the Apostle, knowing the desperate deceitfulness of man’s heart, that instead of doing what it is really called upon to do in all honesty and fairness, it will, through the wiles of the devil, the world and the flesh, be making all sorts of excuses, or only pretending to do what it ought in reality to do, gives this solemn caution, “Be

not deceived : God is not mocked ; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

In other words do not deceive yourselves. If you can by evasions, or misrepresentations, or excuses, satisfy your own consciences, God is not to be imposed upon by such tricks or inventions. God sees into your hearts, and therefore if from covetousness, from lust, from pride or malice you shrink back from your duty, or only do your duty by halves, or try to get away from it by some vain device, or contrivance, merely to satisfy your own or the minds of other persons like yourself, God will call you to strict reckoning. God knows all, even the spring of the most secret of your thoughts, and assuredly your sin sooner or later will find you out. God may defer the punishment, but because it is put off for a time it is not the less certain. You may flatter yourselves that God will forget it. You may say in your hearts, " Tush, does God see this !" But assuredly the time will come when you will bitterly rue such foolish conduct, when He in whose sight the heavens are unclean, and who chargeth His angels with folly, will enter into a strict reckoning, and will call every secret thing to your remembrance, however unprepared you may be to give up such an account of your past conduct. Then if you have only sown to the flesh, you shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

The solemn caution contained in the Text will appear still more weighty, if we endeavour by God's help to enter more fully into the idea which evidently occupied the Apostle's mind, at the time when he wrote those words. He,

as it were, incidentally and hastily introduces the idea of a man sowing and reaping according to the good or bad seed which he puts in the ground. Little is said, but what is said is short and pithy ; containing a world of instruction to those who attend to it. When he speaks of whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap, he speaks not only of the sins of commission but those of omission ; not only of things we actually do, but what we leave undone, and not only what we perform in reality, not only what we actually do, but what we desire to do. So that the expression embraces all that takes place in the whole compass of our lives, from our earliest infancy up to the present moment. What a terrible prospect does this bring before us. We shall reap according to what we have been sowing from the first dawn of existence up to this moment. What have we been sowing ? Let each one ask his own conscience—Have we been sowing heavenly things ?—Have we been sowing to the Spirit ? Have we been living unto God, devoting ourselves to Him with all our heart, with all our mind, and with all our soul ? Have we been more anxious to sow good seed than bad seed ? Have we endeavoured to do this to the best of our power ? Has it been uppermost in our wishes to eat of that bread that cometh down from heaven ? Or have we while sowing only aimed at obtaining that bread which perisheth ?

I fear, my beloved brethren, that it will be found upon a strict and impartial examination of ourselves, that we have wearied ourselves for that which satisfieth not : that we have spent our money for that which is not bread. This is a serious, and ought to be a startling

consideration to us; but it is still more alarming if we carry out the idea of sowing and reaping, as we may judge from what we see in the fields and gardens. Many of you, no doubt, have had opportunities of observing how very productive good seed of any kind is, when sown in good soil which is adapted to it. You know, too, that much to your sorrow, the seed of worthless herbs or weeds is much more fruitful than you wish it to be, and must hinder the growth of the good and useful seed. Think, then, how much more fruitful in evil consequences is the bad seed in your hearts, such as evil passions—pride, avarice, sensuality, drunkenness, love of this world, hatred, malice, envyings, wrath, strife, fornication, adultery, revellings and such like. Think how these must hinder the good seed—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, patience, meekness, temperance. Think to what a height the one will grow if your hearts are a fit soil for their nourishment, and what care and attention will be required on your part for the growth and proper nourishment of the other. As the weeds and refuse will spring up in your corn-fields without any care on your part and grow to a great height and overtop the corn, so will your evil passions spring up and actually domineer over your hearts, till they will bear quite a sway over them, without much encouragement on your part, unless you struggle to keep them down. And, as he who neglects his farm will have the prospect of reaping a worthless crop of weeds, such as nettles, or corn with little or no grain fit for use, so he who sows to the flesh and suffers the bad passions of his nature to rule over his

heart, will find that he is one who has *“sown with the wind and will therefore reap the whirlwind.”

But melancholy and miserable as the lot of that man is in this world, who has suffered the seed of his bad passions to take strong root, and to thrust out the good seed and the fruits of the Spirit, how infinitely more terrible does his condition appear if we extend our thoughts to a future state, and view the consequences there. We know that after we have put one grain of seed into the ground, it goes through a certain process of vegetation which ends in the production of many other grains, exactly like the grain first committed to the earth. Now if we apply this knowledge derived from the contemplation of the natural world, to our meditations upon an after state of existence, if we consider all our bad passions, all our bad thoughts and all our bad deeds, the seed of what must be our state, after the end of this life in another world, how awfully alarming does the prospect appear! If the consequences of sin, even in this world, are for the most part misery, anguish of heart, disappointment and disgrace, what must be the lot of the unforgiven sinner in that eternal world, where hope never comes, and an end of his misery can never be looked for! Mankind are willing enough to persuade themselves that their good deeds shall all be remembered and rewarded in heaven, if they meet with no reward here. They are willing enough to think too that this reward shall be very great and last for ever; that in this light their good deeds shall be considered as good seed springing up and bearing through the

* Hosea viii, 7v.

intercession and merits of the Saviour a thousandfold of good and holy fruit ; but when they are told that their bad deeds also shall be remembered ; that they too must be looked upon as the seed, the bad seed, which also shall spring up and bear a thousandfold of bad fruit, in the misery, the anguish, the torment of that worm that dieth not ; when this is pressed upon them the voice of reason is too often addressed to the ear of unbelief. They know that if this be true, theirs also must be a miserable lot. And as they do not wish it to be true, they gladly avoid the trouble of thinking at all about it. But, my Brethren, is this the course wise men ought to take ? If we believe it to be true, and if we believe what God Himself tells us in the Scriptures, we must believe it to be true, then we are most unwise if we do not give heed to it. Avoiding all thoughts of it will not set it aside. If God declares that he will, upon *“every soul of man that doeth evil, pour forth His indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish,” can we by neglecting all care or thought upon it, render the determination of God of none effect ? No ! by that eternal law which God has appointed in the ordering of things, as well as by the solemn and repeated declarations which He has given us in His holy Word, it must be, that as a man soweth, so must he reap. As we have His promise that every good thought and deed shall have its proper reward, so with the same certainty every evil imagination and every evil action will have, unless repented of and washed away in the blood of the Lord Jesus, its fearful consequences of

* Romans ii., 8, 9.

sin and death. This is the order which the wisdom of God has appointed, and which no reasoning or scheme of our own can possibly change. When *“lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” Remember too that it is only in this life that we can do anything to secure our happiness in another world. There can be no sowing of good seed when the night cometh and no man can work. There can be no repentance in the grave. As the tree falleth, so it lieth. He that dies in his sins and is unjust, will be unjust when summoned before the tribunal of his God. “He that is † filthy will be filthy still.” He that has lived in the habitual violation of God’s commandments, dishonouring God, setting at nought His holy word, neglecting His sabbath, His place of worship, abusing His mercy and wasting his day of grace and dies in this hardened state, can only appear before God as a sinner without excuse. And what can he expect? Can he expect mercy at the hands of that Being whose love and honour up to his dying day he despised. Oh, what can equal the folly of treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath? Is not such conduct more unwise, more foolish than if a farmer were to expect a good crop of wheat in a field that he had never cultivated? In the ordinary matters of life, who would not consider that man a foolish man who looked forward with certainty to obtain things which he never took the proper measures to obtain? Would a sensible man expect to reap where he never sowed? Would a prudent traveller hope to reach the end of his journey if he stirred not one step

* St. James, i. 15. † Rev. xxii. 11.

towards it ? Yet it is as reasonable that the farmer should expect to reap where he did not sow, or that the traveller should go to the end of his journey without taking one single step towards it, as that heaven should be gained without an effort on our part—without doing what God requires. Heaven will be the lot of the faithful and active servant of God—of him who not only calleth upon God but doeth His will. But he who lives to himself, who makes a god of self, yielding his members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, brings forth only fruit unto death. This is the doctrine of the text—he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Here corruption is evidently put in contrast with life everlasting. The man who gives himself up to self, doing what is right only in his own eyes, regardless of God, shall reap corruption : that is, he shall go into that state of corruption in a future world which is sometimes called eternal death. His soul and body are to be given up to the devil and his angels, with them to dwell in that place where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. But on the other hand he who sows to the Spirit, who lives to God and by the Spirit, by the help of God's Holy Spirit acting upon his own spirit, does mortify the body and keep under its unholy desires, living with a view to God's glory and the good of his fellow creatures, he shall reap everlasting life. He shall dwell with God and His angels in that place where the fruit of the sinful seed shall no more be known : where sorrow

and death shall never enter : *“where there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.”

With this fearful alternative offered to us, either of being eternally happy or eternally miserable, according to the seed which we now sow, in other words, according to the course which we now pursue, whether we live unto God or live unto sin, let us pause and consider what we are doing. Let us reflect upon this subject with that seriousness which such a subject deserves. This day, by the mercy of God, we are spared, and now is offered to us our choice of heaven or hell. Is this not deserving all your attention? Is not everlasting happiness or everlasting misery enough to claim all your care? Ought it only to be thought of now and then, when a little time can be spared, as is the custom with some people?

O my brethren, heaven is not to be gained as a matter of course, with that ease that some people seem to think it can be gained. Why was it said—†“Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” Why was it necessary that God should send down from heaven His only begotten Son to seek and to save them that were lost, if heaven could be gained with that ease that some people imagine? It requires our best endeavours. The Kingdom of Heaven, as our Saviour says, suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. We must wrestle, struggle, to get there. God, as I have already said, requires the whole heart—all our best days, all our

* Rev. xxi. 27. † Phil. ii. 12.

best energies, all our best powers. He is not to be served with indifference, now and then, when it may be convenient to us—but always, at all times, and in all places in all things great and small. And while serving Him thus, “be not deceived.” The devil and your own hearts will deceive you if you do not watch. Give God all the glory, and beg Him to accept of your poor services for the sake of His blessed Son, Jesus Christ. Unless the Lord Jesus Christ intercede, and by His Holy Spirit help you and sanctify your poor endeavours, they will be worthless in the sight of God. They will be only “*filthy rags of your own righteousness.” “† He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” All your hopes of heaven must be built on the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. But then you must show forth your faith by your works —by sowing good seed. This the Lord himself tells us : “‡ Not every one,” says He, “that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” Do this, then, my brethren ; put your trust in the Lord God, ask earnestly, ask often for the help of His Holy Spirit, without whose help you can do nothing good, and then through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, in God’s good time, you shall “reap everlasting life.”

* Isaiah lxiv. 6. † 1st St. John v. 12. ‡ Matt. vii. 21.

SERMON VII.

THE NEED OF REPENTANCE.

Job Chap. xlii., v. 5, 6.

(Preached on the First Sunday in Lent.)

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now
mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent
in dust and ashes.

HERE we have a just description of a convinced and self-convicted sinner. While a man is merely living for this world and the gratification of his carnal appetite, he often hears of the Lord by the hearing of the ear, and is perhaps ready to believe that there is a God; but then he destroys all the good that should arise from such a belief either by supposing that God is even such an one as himself in His mind and desires, or else he excuses his sin and folly and flatters himself that God will forgive it after all. He thinks within himself that, if he discharge effectually the ordinary duties of life as a good Father, a good Master, and a good Husband; if he pay his way regularly and keep a tolerably even account with the world, he is at all events as good as his neighbours, and that if he were to perish what would be come of all the world? These, and such like sentiments, are sufficient to set him right in his own eyes, and, as he thinks, in the eyes of God. But, alas! how far short is such a state of that perfect righteousness which alone can be acceptable before God. Job thought himself a righteous man and able to plead his

cause before God, till God convinced him that he was only a weak and guilty sinner. And so, now, when the Spirit of God has convinced any man of his sinful nature and state, and that veil falls from his eyes, which in his ignorance he had carried about with him, he begins to see the deformity and depth of his depravity. A state of things rises suddenly before his eyes, of which before he had not the most distant notion. He sees that all his righteousness is but filthy rags, and that he needs in the presence of God a better righteousness than any which he or any of his fallen brethren can procure by any merit of their own. He sees that sin is at the bottom of everything with which he has to do, and that all sin is under the curse of God's violated law. He sees that sin is even in every thought as well as every act of his—that, so far from having any hope in himself, he has been living a life of sin while he flattered himself that he was not worse than others—that he has been making self the grand spring when all ought to have been overuled with a single eye to God's glory. So far from God being such an one as he thought, he sees that He is holy, perfect, just, great—whilst he knows, too well, that his thoughts are only evil continually, and he himself compassed with imperfection and infirmity. Well may he then exclaim, like Isaiah, * “Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.” In such a spirit, doubtless, Job gave utterance to his thoughts in the words of the text, “I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye

* Isaiah, vi. 5.

seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." The light broke in upon his eyes when the Almighty condescended to reason with him and show his ignorance and imbecility. He at one time was righteous in his own estimation, and was willing to be weighed in a balance, that God might know his integrity; but when God was pleased to open his eyes and show him his real state, he made haste to acknowledge his unworthiness and show his repentance. This was the very thing that God required. His reward followed, * "The Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning."

Repentance then being so acceptable in the sight of God, and so necessary to us all, seeing that we all, if not greater sinners than Job, are at least as sinful as Job, let us turn our attention to it to-day, while we have the opportunity. Our church particularly calls our attention to this subject at this season of the year. Last Wednesday, which is called Ash-Wednesday from the circumstance of our forefathers casting ashes or earth upon their heads, and lying in sackcloth and ashes, in sign of their humiliation and their repentance, was the commencement of a period called Lent. This, therefore, is the first Sunday in Lent. It is called Lent, because in the language formerly in use in this country, Lent meant Spring, and therefore it was the same as if we were to call it, in common speech, the Spring-fast. It is that period of forty days generally set aside by the Christians in former times for humbling themselves, and repenting and confessing their sins before Easter, the great Festival

* Verse 12.

of our Saviour's resurrection. Moses, Elias, and especially our blessed Lord himself, all fasted forty days. Though we do not now fast as did our forefathers, yet it is our bounden duty to show our repentance, and to mourn and grieve over our sins, earnestly begging God to pardon them, with a steadfast resolution on our parts to live henceforth better lives. With this view let me seize the present opportunity to point out to you wherein repentance consists, what considerations should under God's blessing excite in us a true repentance for our sins, how we ought to express our sorrow for our sins, what is meant by a firm resolution of amendment, and what is the best method to make such a resolution effectual, together with some other remarks which the subject may suggest.

May the Almighty, without whose blessing all our efforts are vain, send us the help of His Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen us, so that I may speak a word in season to you, which by His assistance may work in you a repentance not to be repented of.

Repentance consists in such a change of our minds as produces the like change in our lives and conversations. So that to repent of our sins is to be convinced that we have done what we ought not to have done, and this conviction ought to be so deep that from it should follow a hearty sorrow for our past follies, and a firm and effectual purpose of mind, to forsake them for the time to come. This change, if real and effectual, will be so great in our desires and resolutions, that the Scripture calls it a new nature, the sincerity and reality of which appears in actions suitable to such new principles.

This mighty change no one can effect in himself by his own strength alone, but God will assuredly help him if he seek the assistance of His Holy Spirit, He has promised to do so. For “*turn ye even to me with all your heart,” saith the Lord, “and rend your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord; for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repented him of the evil.” In another place we are told to “† draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you.”

And who, my brethren, who that considers that by his sins he has fallen under the heavy and most just displeasure of Almighty God, whose infinite patience he has tried and wearied a thousand times since his birth, who that calls this to mind can forbear to grieve over his wickedness? Who that knows and feels that by his sins he has separated himself from the fountain of all real happiness, God Almighty, can feel other than sorrow and pain for his numberless transgressions? Who that calls to mind how much our beloved Redeemer suffered for the sins of men, can help but loathe and abhor his wickedness, and feel anger at himself as a sinner? Who is there, who does not feel that he has been a thousand times ungrateful to his God and his Saviour? Do we hate ingratitude when we see it manifested to our fellow-creatures, when we see our friends treated unkindly in return for their love and kindness, think how often have we been ungrateful to our God and our Saviour? God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but

* Joel ii., 12 18. † St. James iv., 8.

have everlasting life. God gave His only begotten Son to suffer and to die for us. What have we given God in return ? Have we given Him our hearts ? Have we given Him our affections ? No ! We have lived unto ourselves and not unto God. We have as far as depended upon us, banished God from the universe and been a God unto ourselves. We have given way to our own appetites ; we have humoured our wicked imaginations ; we have indulged our pride, our sloth, our luxury, our covetousness ; and what might we reasonably expect of God in return ? That He would abandon us also, and leave us to that ruin which we so justly merited. But He in infinite mercy has not done so. No. He sent His only begotten Son, the dearest person to Him in the whole world, to seek out and to save them that were lost. And by Him has He reconciled all things unto Himself, by Him, I say, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven. Through Him alone may we hope for forgiveness ; through Him alone obtain it. With such a display of God's infinite goodness before us, and such a load of sin and wickedness pressing upon us, shall we be backward to express our sorrow for such fatal misconduct on our part ?

If we have any proper feeling, my dear brethren, if we have any proper sense of God's goodness and our own unworthiness, shame and confusion will cover our faces when we think how often we have offended Him ; hatred and detestation of our sins will rise in our hearts, when we think of the hideousness and extreme sinfulness of our sins, and how dear those sins cost our blessed Lord ; when we think how he agonised in the garden

and expired upon the cross for your sin and my sin, the Just One, the Holy One of God, for the accursed, the condemned, the ruined in body and soul. Surely, if we have any proper sense of our sinful state before God, we shall testify the reality of our sorrow by those ways that were practised by repenting sinners, whom we read of in the Old and New Testament, such as Ezra, David, Nehemiah, St. Peter, and St. Paul. We shall not only weep and mourn for our sins, but we shall freely confess, both in public and in private, that we are laden with sin and burdened with iniquity. Both body and mind should be humbled and mortified. Both have been partakers in the same sins and therefore both should be joined together in humiliation and repentance.

To this must be united a hearty, sincere resolution henceforth to forsake our sins and to serve the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength. This resolution should be formed after serious and calm deliberation, after duly considering what it will cost us to lead a holy and religious life, devoted to God, and raised above those worldly desires that we see prevalent around us. It should be a resolution as firm and steadfast as Jacob's vow, “*If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, then shall the Lord be my God.” A resolution very different from those fleeting, hasty resolutions that ungodly sinners form in a moment of fear or pain, but which they break again as soon as they are freed from their trouble. It should be a resolution built upon love and gratitude towards God,

* Genesis, xxviii. 20, 21.

and cherished in the spirit of real genuine Christian faith. Such a resolution will bring forth, under the Divine blessing, fruits that declare its character ; such as meekness, love, gentleness, temperance, humility, a command over the passions, and a desire for heavenly things.

And in order to make such a resolution effectual and lasting, we must continue instant in prayer to God to give us the help of His Holy Spirit, knowing that all our strength is derived from that Divine source. With this heavenly help we must be on our guard and make our resolution applicable at all times and under all circumstances, at home and abroad. We must be more on the alert than the most active soldier in the presence of a vigilant enemy, for we, my brethren, wrestle not against flesh, but against the Powers of Darkness, against spiritual wickedness in high places. We must never consider ourselves safe from the attack of such an insidious enemy, but even when there appears to be no temptation, we must be still on the look out and continually bear in mind our resolution to serve God. We must show our repentance and our resolution to lead a new life, not merely by words, not merely by sighs and groans, not by professions only, but by our actions. In whatever point we have failed, as regards our duty to God and our duty to our neighbour, we must do our best to make all the amends in our power.

Indispensably necessary, however, as this repentance and resolution to amend is, binding as it is upon all, we must have a care, my brethren, that we do not suppose

for a moment that it is on account of this God is graciously pleased to receive his fallen creatures again into favour. Repentance is a condition but not the cause of our acceptance with God. Holy Job, when comparing himself, good and upright as once he thought himself, with the unblemished purity and exalted perfections of the Deity, could see sufficient reason to abhor himself and repent in dust and ashes. And the more an awakened sinner sees his real state as compared with that innocence and integrity exhibited in the spotless character of our adorable Redeemer, the more will he have cause to mourn like St. Paul over his fallen nature, and feel and see his unfitness as far as regards his own merits alone to enter into those heavenly mansions where *there shall in no wise enter in anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. It is only the Beloved Son, the Saviour Jesus, in whom God is well pleased. †All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. And however deep may be our repentance, however firm may be our resolutions, our only hope is in the Holy One of God, the Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. Repentance is absolutely necessary, for God will only receive us upon condition of our repentance, and turning to Him with all our hearts, nor will the Saviour mediate in favour of those who will not accept of His mediation in the way that God the Father requires. But after all we must be content and thankful to obtain salvation solely through the merits

* Rev. xxi, 27.

† Isaiah liii, 6.

of Him. We must have His merits imputed to us, His righteousness put upon us like a garment; and clothed in such a robe God Himself will not see a blemish in us. And blessing, and power, and glory be unto our God for affording such a salvation, the only salvation that could be effectual to ruined man.

We, my brethren, could never dare to aspire to heaven upon the strength of our own merits. But Christ, as our Mediator, is present before His Heavenly Father, to plead our cause, and to declare that for repentant sinners He suffered in Gethsemane, and expired upon Calvary. And as God declares to us in the Book of Genesis that when He looks upon the rainbow He will remember the covenant between Himself and every living creature of all flesh, so when He looks upon the Lamb of God in the courts of heaven He graciously remembers His promise. He looks upon the merits of His beloved Son, and in the infinite value of such a glorious offering in their behalf, the sins of repentant sinners are cancelled and blotted out. It is only for the sake of what Christ endured that God is pleased to forgive us and not to consign us to eternal punishment, but this forgiveness is only granted upon conditions. We must repent to make us capable of obtaining that pardon which Christ has purchased for us, for repentance and forgiveness of sins are expressly joined together by our Lord himself in that direction which He gave to His Disciples, saying, as we read in St. Luke's Gospel, ch. xxiv, verse 47—“That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations.”

Now to God the Father, &c.

SERMON VIII.

SELF-DENIAL REQUIRED.

St. Matthew's Gospel, Chap. xvi., v. 24.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

PRAYER.

ASSIST us, O Lord, by Thy grace to watch over our thoughts, words and works. May we hate vain thoughts, and daily become more spiritual and heavenly-minded. Help us, O God of our salvation, to mortify the pride and wickedness of our hearts. Deliver us from unduly seeking our own and pleasing ourselves. Make us willing to be last of all and the servants of all, so that Thou in all things mayest be glorified, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Our Father, &c.

MANY people are very jealous of what they call their liberty. On this account they are very sensitive of the interference of others. Even the well-meant suggestions of a sincere friend are often received with suspicion. On this account it is often the truest

wisdom to keep silence and make no remark at all, even when we see much that we cannot approve of, unless there is reason to suppose that we can influence our erring brother and induce him to act differently. But whilst a man is often thus vigilant about his personal freedom, he is at the same time not unfrequently the slave of some secret prejudice or passion. He is not free in a proper sense. No one is free except he who in the fullest sense has renounced the world, the flesh and the devil, as he undertook to do in his baptism. In the second Collect, for our Morning Service, the Collect for Peace, it is rightly put, that the "Service of God is perfect freedom." The service of the devil is perfect slavery, slavery of mind as well as body. He who denies not himself, as our Lord in the text requires him to do, is that slave. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. If ye serve not God, ye serve the devil. One Master you must serve. You cannot partly serve one and partly the other so as to belong to either as a servant. Choose this day, then, brethren, whom ye will serve. The Lord Jesus Christ in all faithfulness sets before you heaven and hell, life and death, blessing and cursing. He tells you what will be required of you—that trial and temptation await you here, and at the end life and a blessed immortality. But to obtain this all must be surrendered up to Him. "*He that loveth father or mother more than Me, says our Lord, is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of

* Matt. x. 37, 38, 39.

Me. He that findeth his life shall lose it ; and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it."

In the ears of worldly people this may seem strange. It may seem almost unreasonable ; and yet all experience shows that this self-denial is not less necessary for our happiness on earth than it is for a preparation for a blessed eternity. Ask the man who has been most devoted to this world's wealth if he has found happiness. Ask the man of pleasure if his joys have ever been unmixed bliss. Ask the careless, the idle, the indifferent if their lives have been such as they could wish them to be, if they had to go through them again and they will all tell you something has been wrong, that there has been always a bar of some kind to their happiness, in other words that they never were happy in a proper sense. And if they were to be spared to the age of Methuselah, they never could attain to happiness without betaking themselves to the service of the Lord, without taking up their cross and following Him. Let me then show how this self-denial should be practised in our daily lives in

1. In Thought.
2. In Word.
3. In Deed.

May the Holy Spirit be with us and guide us in our meditations, and lead us into all truth to the honour of Him, whose we are and whom we ought to serve.

1. We must exercise self-denial in thought.

Many people, I had almost said most people, leave their thoughts to take any course they are disposed to take, without any kind of government whatever. Because

their thoughts are not visible to the human eye, they are apt to forget that they are seen by the Divine Eye. But we, who believe in the omnipresence of the Deity, should bear in mind that He who is about our bed and about our path sees into our inmost thoughts, that we are accountable to Him for the sins of desire and thought, as well as of purpose and act. It is expressly stated that at the last day He will reveal the counsels of men's hearts. Out of the heart, says our Lord, proceed “*evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.” Do you believe this? Our Lord says this, and if you believe Him it must be true. It is true, as we all know by bitter experience, as well as by the Word of God, “† The thoughts of men's hearts are only evil continually.” Who then is at the bottom of all this evil? The devil—yes, it is the devil. The devil tempts us by our thoughts, by filling the mind with lies and deception. Hence how necessary to keep a guard over our hearts, over the whole current of our thoughts, to be always on the watch—to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation. Even the most confirmed and experienced Christians have constant need of watchfulness and prayer against this insidious enemy. And yet in ordinary life it seems quite overlooked, that our great spiritual enemy is always watching for an opportunity to work on our thoughts and turn them to evil. There can be no doubt that, situated as we are in such a changeable, uncertain world of temptation and trial, trust in the Saviour and prayer to God for the help of the Holy Spirit is our great defence. Next to

* Matt., xv. 19.

† Gen. vi. 5.

that is godly occupation, and this is within reach of all, even of one bound to the bed of sickness. The helpless invalid can work in thought if not in action. The little hymn we teach our children is still as true as ever—

“In works of wisdom or of skill,
I would be busy too;
For Satan finds some mischief still,
For idle hands to do.”

Next let me touch on the self-denial required in—

2. Word.

This kind of self-denial is the most difficult of any, from the constant tendency incidental to our fallen nature, to give utterance to the first promptings of a corrupt heart. With the great majority of mankind who have not the fear of God before their eyes, and even little fear of human laws, not much self-denial as to the tongue is even so much as attempted. There is good reason to fear that what has been called by some freedom of speech has long since degenerated into licentiousness of the tongue. This is an evil which calls loudly for our attention, in an age when all ideas of wholesome restraint are by many quite ignored. The tendency of the age is all in favour of this unseasonable and dangerous freedom. People of all classes, learned and unlearned, old and young, are both speaking and writing upon subjects of the most solemn character, without pausing for a moment to consider the amount of mischief they are calling forth, or their own ignorance and unfitness to discuss such subjects. People boast of the light and intelligence of the present day, but in their speech show that they lack the prudence and wisdom of our thoughtful ancestors. Subjects which they ap-

proached with awe and diffidence, are in these days tossed and tumbled about with an audacity which we might have only expected from the rashness of youth or the recklessness of inexperience. Many whose mouths proclaim their own unfitness, set themselves up as models of perfection, and the more ignorant they are, the more fit they seem to consider themselves to teach others. With professions of charity on the tongue, and rancour and discontent in their hearts, they come forward, nominally to benefit their fellow-creatures, really to gratify themselves, their own pride and self-deceit. “*The tongue is fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell.” This is the language of inspiration, and not a tittle too strong, admirably adapted to the present day. The idolatrous love of oratory that prevails through all ranks is an alarming sign, very ominous in the eyes of the close observer. No doubt, we or our children shall have to pay a very heavy penalty for all this folly. Going to the assembly, whether that assembly be held in a Church, a Chapel, the House of Parliament or the Public Hall of some local board, with itching ears, wishing to be amused and gratified, whatever else take place, we are continually hearing observations calculated to shake our faith in what is holy and what has been established by the wisdom of successive generations, while opportunities are afforded for restless spirits to explode, and common sense is crushed under a multitude of useless words. The great majority seek their own aggrandisement, and if

there be a small portion, with whom selfishness bears less sway, they seem either not to remember, or perhaps not to know, that it is easier to find fault than to improve, that the minds of men may be soon set in motion but not so readily controlled. There is however in the English character a stubbornness, thank God, a gravity, which upborne by the Protestant Religion, may, we would devoutly hope, present a barrier to this rapidly increasing torrent of folly and delusion. We must, under God, look to sound education, based on the Word of God, to assist most effectually in checking this evil. Above all things let parents and teachers inculcate in the rising generation humility and a modest distrust in themselves, a spirit of inquiry, and the habit of comparing all they learn and think with the dictates of the Holy Scriptures. And whilst teaching others humility, let them show daily examples of it in their own lives and practice. An eminent writer of ancient times, describes words as "winged," thereby denoting how they fly about and extend their influence beyond our control, after once uttered. Aged and grave Divines, as Philosophers formerly, find it difficult in these days to take care that none but discreet words proceed from their tongues.

We need not wonder, therefore, that so much that is undesirable is heard in our domestic circles. We cannot be too careful in this matter, nor lay too much stress upon it. The Apostle St. James had a very bad opinion of this unruly member, the tongue. "* The tongue," says he, "can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." However, the worse we

* James iii. 8.

think of it, the more careful should we be to guard it, to keep the door of our lips,* as the Psalmist says, and teach our children to weigh well every word before they give utterance to it. In this as in all other acts of self-denial, our blessed Lord set us the brightest example. Never did an inadvertent word fall from the lips of Jesus. “†When He was reviled He reviled not again ; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to him that judgeth righteously.” We should bring up our children as little Samuel was brought up, in the fear of God, and pray for them, that it would please the Lord in His great mercy to teach them to govern themselves, especially their tongues, and not let any “‡of their words fall to the ground.”

Next let me beg you to practise this self-denial in deed—in your daily course of life. Show to the world that you are born again, that henceforth you live to the glory of Him who died for you and rose again, that he might purify you and present you to himself a holy people and without blemish. Surely for Him who has done so much for us it were a small return to give up all for Him. This is what He requires—“§If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” Here our Lord shows us that we must exercise such self-denial, that we must be prepared to part with the dearest things in this world to us, if our duty to Him require us to do so. We must not hesitate

* Psalm cxli. 8. † I Peter, ii., 23. ‡ 1 Sam., iii., 19. § Luke xiv., 26, 27.

to tear ourselves even from our natural parents or our own children, if they should stand in the way of our doing our duty to Him. He must reign in our hearts above all. He only must be Lord over our affections. All things that only threaten to occupy the place in our hearts which should be his alone, we must regard as idols, as instruments in the hands of the devil, to seduce us and deceive us, and lead us astray from the good Shepherd. And in order to induce us to adopt this course, let us consider the self-denial which our Lord himself in his own person exhibited. I should premise, however, that there must be many things, some seen, and some unseen, in his character, far above our comprehension. A Being infinitely exalted above the highest Archangel must be infinitely above the comprehension of the highest human intellect. Still we can see enough to admire for ever his wondrous humility, and to call forth our liveliest gratitude and most zealous imitation. The object of adoring love to all the hosts of heaven, He descended from the zenith of His glory to sojourn upon earth. He emptied Himself of His glory and took man's nature upon Him. He denied Himself and came to do the will of Him that sent Him. “*He took upon Him the form of a servant;” He, the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, condescended to sojourn upon earth, and as a Brother to bring help to his fallen brethren, and through much tribulation, in order to serve them, again to enter into His glory. For the joy that was before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame. From the cradle to the grave His

* Phil. ii. 7.

life was one continued scene of trial, temptation, and sorrow. To bear his cross, to live in the constant exercise of self-denial was His daily, hourly lot. “* The foxes had holes and the birds of the air had nests, but the Son of man had not where to lay His head.” Neither the malice of his enemies tauntingly calling upon him to show his power, nor the insidious advice or suggestions of His disciples could divert Him from His course or lead Him to interfere with the designs of Providence. If Peter, in his hasty but honest zeal say to his Lord in the hope of averting his painful death, “Be it far from thee,” Jesus replies, “†Get thee behind me, Satan.” The Saviour rebuking him, tells him, that he was in the tendency, though not in the design of his words, a tempter, an adversary to Him; and influenced by human weakness, instead of religious fortitude. “§If the same disciple would defend him by violence, he bids him desist, and reminds him that he could call this aid presently more than twelve legions of angels.” “But,” says he, “how then shall the Scripture be fulfilled that thus it must be?” If in the agony of His bitter passion he pray, “||O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,” he adds, “nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt.” If the railing Jews in the fury of their rancour cried out, “He saved others, himself he cannot save; if he be the King of Israel let him come down from the cross and we will believe him,” even then, in that dreadful hour, in the height of his conflict with the prince of evil spirits, he turned from vengeance to

* Matt. viii., 20. † Matt. xvi. 23. ‡ See Note in Matt. xvi., 23, in D’Oyly’s Bible. § Matt. xxvi., 58. || Matt. xxvi., 39.

compassion, he denied himself, drank the bitter cup to the very dregs and exclaimed, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do."

Surely, brethren, when we call to mind all that was endured for our sakes, to rescue us from eternal ruin and reconcile unto us unto God, we cannot think anything too great, anything too difficult for us to do in obedience to His wishes. Greater love hath no man than this—that a man lay down his life for his friend ; but for us, while we were sinners, that is, enemies to God in our hearts and wicked works, Christ died, and thus became our Saviour. And we are expressly told by the Apostle Peter* that in all this, whilst he made an atonement for our sins, he set us an example. Our Baptismal Service put us in mind of our duty in this respect. There we are exhorted to "tremember always, that Baptism doth represent unto us our profession ; which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him ; that, as he died and rose again for us, so should we, who are baptized, die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness ; continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living."

With such a bright, such a sublime example before us shall we hesitate to tread in the steps of our dear Redeemer ? Shall we have one moment's hesitation what it ought to be our duty to do ? If we do hesitate, the fault must be entirely our own. He has held out to us the brightest promises, the most loving assurances, at the same time faithfully telling us what we must

* 1 Peter ii. 21. † See Baptismal Service, towards the end.

expect in this world and what in the world to come. Nothing has been left undone on his part to secure our eternal salvation. Every one is invited to accept the "unspeakable gift." No exception is made whatever. The *halt, the maimed, the blind, the rich and the poor, bad and good, are all invited to the great feast. To comfort, to strengthen, to encourage us, the Holy Spirit is promised to all who ask for His help. All Three Persons in the Blessed Trinity are concerned in this great work, and hosts of angelic beings are ready to minister to them who shall be heirs of this mighty salvation.

Surely, brethren, you cannot hitherto have been sufficiently alive to your privileges as the children of God! If you were sufficiently alive, could the wretched husks of this world's pleasures have such charms from you? If you had the glory of heaven before your eyes and the wonderful price paid for your share of it, could you think it hard to deny yourselves for the short space of seventy years, it may be, (life is so uncertain), only for seventy days? What a lesson is taught by the fate of him who said to his soul, "†Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; eat, drink and be merry." Here was an absence, a total absence of all self-denial. Here pure, unmixed selfishness, here was an instance of an individual giving himself up to his own vile low desires, to eating, drinking and making merry, merry for a few minutes, miserable through all eternity. What did the God of wisdom say to the selfish wretch? "Thou fool, *thou fool*, this night

* Luke, xiv. 21. † Luke xii. 19.

shall thy soul be required of thee." Did ever any one obey the Lord, take up his cross and follow him and regret having done so ? Was he ever disappointed in not obtaining his reward ? No. This is as certain as the contrary is equally true. Never did any one give way to self and serve this world without being disappointed and bitterly disappointed too. How common is it to meet with people who have set their hearts upon some particular object, it may be the making of a fortune under the excuse of providing for old age ; or the educating of a child, that he may get on in the world, as it is usually said ; or the improvement of an estate to found a family, or make his own family conspicuous in some way, or even the prosecution of some art or science with such enthusiasm as to shut out all regard to everything else, the concerns of the soul or any other weighty consideration ; and then to find this man, who must indulge his own peculiar taste at any cost, lamenting and bemoaning his own folly, expatiating freely on his own disappointments, and making general observations about the unsatisfactory nature of everything in this world. I have no doubt some here have heard of or seen instances of this dissatisfaction. And what did it all arise from ? From seeking happiness where it was not to be found ; in the creature instead of the Creator, from not denying themselves and living unto God. This you cannot do by your own strength but the Holy Spirit is ready to lead you into all truth. Ask your God to give you the help of this blessed Spirit, ask earnestly in faith. Devoutly implore the Lord Jesus Christ to remember his promise to send the Comforter,

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the Holy Ghost, to help you in your efforts. It is His special office to take of the things that are Christ's, and show them unto men, to display all the excellencies of Christ before the eyes of his people. Are your sins of a grievous character? He will show you that Christ is a Saviour able to cleanse from sins of the darkest dye. Do you feel the weariness of the conflict, that to deny yourself and take up your cross is an endless struggle, that you cannot do the things that you would? The Holy Spirit will show you that Christ is your Advocate with the Father, and that He ever liveth to make intercession for you, and that His grace is sufficient for you under all your temptations. It is only with the help of the Holy Ghost that we can form any adequate idea of the greatness of that salvation which Christ has wrought out for us, and of his wondrous unparalleled love. And O! when the Holy Ghost does take of the love of Christ and discover unto men “*its length and breadth and depth and height.” What joy and transport does He impart! Truly it is “†a joy that is unspeakable and glorified;” a very heaven upon earth. Such manifestations of the Saviour's glory cannot be made to the world, because the world has no dispositions suited to them: but to the believer they are made; and they produce in him a determination of heart to consecrate himself wholly and for ever to the Lord.

* Eph. iii. 17, 18. † See Simeon's John xvi. 14, P 48, vol. xiv.

SERMON IX.

ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

St. Luke, Chap. xiv. v. 16, 17, 18.

Then said He unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many : And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come ; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse.

IT has often been observed that our Lord frequently took up His discourses from things just occurring at the time, but so deep and exhaustless is the Word of God that what our Lord was led to observe, apparently often from incidental causes, is found wonderfully applicable not only to the hearers then present, but to persons in all ages and in all countries. Thus the words of the Text doubtless were addressed to the unbelieving Jews who would not listen to the Gospel when the Son of God was preaching it to them. But how applicable are they to all of us ! Who is there amongst us that has received the glad tidings of the Gospel, the invitation from the King of Heaven, with that joy and gladness that he ought to have shown ? Who is there that has not made excuses to be absent from the feast of the Lord ? How often have our thoughts wandered to the things of this world, even when we were in the courts of the Lord's house ? It is to be feared also that too many of us have drawn near with our lips while our

hearts were far from Him. Even the common duties of religion we must confess before God that we have not discharged as we ought, and if we were called to a strict account what could we expect? But with regard to some of the leading ordinances of religion, especially the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, there is reason to fear that the state of many is still worse. Let me then seize the present occasion to inquire into the causes of our neglect, and then after having made some observations upon these heads, let me like a good physician not only point out the cause and nature of the disease, but show you a remedy.

I take it for granted that as I am addressing a body of Christian people you all freely confess that you are sinners. If you believe your own Scriptures you must confess this much, but doubtless your own consciences bear testimony to the truth of St. John's declaration, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us, but if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Beloved brethren, one grand cause of all this sin and neglect on our part is doubtless that sinful nature which we inherit from our great forefather Adam. From our earliest infancy we go astray. Gladly do we find or make excuses even to disobey our earthly parents, and much more do we transgress as regards our heavenly Father. "*Vain man would be wise," as Job says, "though man be born like a wild ass's colt." Always is it more agreeable to our carnal nature if left to its

own corrupt state to follow the bent of its wicked desires, than to turn to the call of God, or listen to the words of real wisdom. But depraved as we are by our fallen nature, we render this state of things infinitely worse by our own inattention, by our want of consideration. God calls, but how few regard? The simplest things are often made use of as excuses not to attend to our duty. This is all to be ascribed to our own neglect or want of attention. Numberless are the pleas set up by people for neglecting the Sabbath, for not coming to Church, for absenting themselves from the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, for not doing unto others as we would they should do unto us. But if we considered our state before God, that we are responsible to Him for all that we now do, for the duties which we neglect as well as for the sins which we commit, if we considered all this and thought that by neglecting one duty or committing one sin, we were exposing our souls to eternal ruin, nay, that by one sin which we may think trifling, and which possibly does not occupy one minute in the commission of it, we might lose all hope of heaven for ever, did we consider this as we ought, surely we should act differently. Would any wise man ruin all his worldly wealth or riches for the sake of one minute's pleasure? Now in such a matter as this we can show some good judgement, but where the soul is at stake we rush rashly on without thinking. What can all this arise from but from want of consideration? Surely from selfish motives, if from no higher ground, did we consider what was for our own good, we should pause and listen when God asks us in the words of the Wise Man,

“*can a man take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burned.” All human beings are naturally selfish, however unwilling they may be to admit this mortifying truth. If they did not love themselves and study to please themselves before others, why do they do things continually which they would not approve of in others? Oh that they would but love themselves in this most important particular, the care of the soul! Oh that they would but set the things of the soul first and the things of the body second, for “†what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul!”

And this leads me to another cause of our neglect, viz., the ignorance which exists in the world respecting the real value and nature of spiritual things.

I cannot willingly believe that men, very honourable and praiseworthy in all the relations of life—men who are kind and faithful husbands and affectionate fathers, men who are very industrious, very honest, and in fact all that we could wish as far as this world is concerned, would pursue that course in regard to their religious state which we find so many do, if they took time to consider and learn what was their real and eternal interest. These persons so upright, so anxious to pay their way, and do all that is right in the sight of man, evidently seem to think that if they still continue in such a way they shall be admitted into heaven as a matter of course. Now this all arises from want of reflection upon the subject; in other words from want of consideration and thoroughly understanding what God requires. For what does God require? Does God require that we should serve Him

* Prov. vi. 27. † Matt. xvi. 26.

just as we can spare time from our worldly pursuits ? Oh no ! but that we should give Him as His due all our hearts and give up all our affections unto Him ; as our Lord says, “*If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, yea and even his own life also, he cannot be my Disciple,”—thereby showing that every thing, even the dearest things to us in this world, must be held as secondary compared with our love and duty to Him. Are we not God’s servants ? and therefore under the highest obligation of giving up to Him all our energies and time ? But what should we think of one of our servants if instead of giving up all his time to us, he made all sorts of excuses, staying away at times altogether from our houses, as too many stay away from God’s house ? Again, what should we think of a servant who took no pains to ascertain the nature of his duties ? If we are ignorant of our duty, we have little or no excuse ; for if you cannot read, you can come to God’s house and hear or learn in some way. But, thank God, most of us can read and can get our Bibles to read, and oh, if there were but a will to study that blessed book and learn by the help of God’s Holy Spirit, we should soon have very different ideas of real religion. All the errors which we see people continually committing in religious matters, all the mistakes and wrong ideas upon this subject, would be soon removed, if with a teachable spirit we would seek instruction from our Bibles. One man hears God’s summons that the great supper is prepared, that the Gospel of God is made known and heaven is opened through Christ Jesus, but thinks it time enough

* Luke xiv., 26.

to attend to all this by and by. Let him consult his Bible, and it will tell him, that *now is the accepted time*, now is the day of salvation. Another man hears the summons and perhaps will go so far as to possess a willingness to listen, but then he must have salvation in his own way, upon his own terms, not upon God's terms. The Bible will tell him,—this is the appointed way, “* Walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.” One man will not come to church because his business requires him. Another will not come to the Sacrament because he is not fit. The Bible speaks to all as perishing sinners. “† Turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy Lord, honourable ; and honour Him, not doing thine own ways, not finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words.” “‡ Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden,” cries the Saviour, “ and I will give you rest.” Yes let the heavy laden, let him who thinks himself not fit come unto the great supper, that great supper which his Lord has prepared for him as the dear memorial of His death, let him however he may think himself unfit come in faith, and he will find that it will be strength to him against all the corruptions and temptations of this world, communion with God and a fore-taste of heaven in the soul. It is too from want of faith or unbelief that so many of us are found bent upon making all sorts of excuses not to attend that great supper, that real feast of the soul which God is continually holding out to a thoughtless and unbelieving world. Can we

* Isaiah xxx., 21. † Isaiah lviii. 13. ‡ Matt. xi. 28.

believe what God declares and yet any longer hesitate to accept the proffered blessing ? God has spoken to us by His blessed Son. He has prepared a great supper for us all in Heaven. He has sent us His only Son to tell us all things are ready. He calls with stretched-out hands to the rich and to the poor, to the high and to the low, to the good and to the bad. Surely we cannot believe that God calls, or we should hasten to accept such a gracious invitation. If any man were to invite his neighbour to a feast, if he believed that he really wished him to come, would he not go ? Surely if God has called us, we must either altogether disbelieve the call, or make light of the call, by thinking we can accept it by going at any time if we do not attend to it now.

But Oh, my brethren, let us not be so hardened, so blind, as to put off a thing of such infinite importance upon such uncertain grounds. “* Boast not thyself of to-morrow for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.” You cannot tell even what weather there will be to-morrow ; much less whether you shall live till to-morrow. You cannot calculate for a certainty upon things apparently even under your own control for the next day, much less for things quite out of your control, such as life and death. Let me then, as a good physician, point out and urge you to embrace the only remedy of all your ills, and that too without delay.

In a word, “† cast all your care on God and come to Christ,” as a remedy for all your diseases. Come to Him in the way that He has pointed out. Come to Him in His ordinances. The blood which is to cleanse

* Prov. xxvii. 1. † 1 Peter, v., 7.

you is already shed ; the Spirit that is to renew you is already poured out ; God is through the one offering of the Lord Jesus Christ, reconciled and ready to receive you ; nothing is wanting, but that you come and fill the place already prepared for you.

Delay not, for by delay you pour contempt upon God's mercy ; but, Oh, beware of such wickedness and such ungrateful conduct ! The excuses offered by the persons alluded to in the text for not coming to the Supper, were not sinful in themselves. It is all very proper to buy a piece of ground and to go and see it, or to purchase oxen and prove them or try them, but then all this must be done at its proper time and place, and not to the neglect of God's ordinances.

Nothing however good in itself, however necessary, must be suffered to interpose between us and that one thing necessary, the salvation of the soul. Every thing becomes sinful, if followed in the slightest degree to the neglect of God, and God declares that "He is angry with those, who prefer their earthly pursuits, however proper in themselves, to His glory and what is due to Him. He declares in the parable, from which the text is taken, that none of those persons shall taste of His Supper. How terrible does this appear, if we call to mind, how often we have not attended to His calls ; how often "we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and done those things which we ought not to have done."

Let me then address a few words to those who are unwilling to accept the invitations of the Gospel and come to the great Supper, and also a few words to those

who, thinking unworthily and humbly of themselves, are afraid to come, and fancy themselves too vile to be admitted into God's presence.

And first to those who are afraid to come—

It would be strange, if we did not know from almost daily experience, that any after such a full description as we meet with in the chapter from which the text is taken, that any should be induced to stop away from such a motive. *The poor, the maimed, the halt and the blind are all invited to come to the Supper of God. The wanderers in the highways and hedges are to be compelled by God's ministers to come to Him. Shall any one think then that he is unworthy, that God will refuse Him admittance? Has He not said on the contrary, that “†him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out?” Let then the trembling sinner take courage. Oh, let him only beg of God to help him by His Holy Spirit to become more fit, and then let him come in the full exercise of real faith, real belief in the merits of the Lord Jesus, and he shall find all the ordinances that God has appointed a blessed means of his becoming every day of his life more and more fit.

Here then let me say a few words upon that hallowed Ordinance, entitled the Supper of the Lord. To this memorial of our Lord the words of the text admit of a close and special application, and I especially call your attention now to this subject, because I know by sad experience that too many stop away from this blessed rite because they are afraid to partake of it; they think themselves not fit, and they flatter themselves

* Luke xiv., 21, 23. † John's Gospel, vi. 37.

that they shall be fitter by and by. Now my brethren, far be it from me to urge any of you who are really unfit and unwilling to prepare to come to that Holy Ordinance, but remember if you are unfit to be partakers at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, you are unfit to die. Will you not then set immediately about preparing yourselves? And when you are properly prepared to die you are prepared to stay and partake of that blessed Ordinance. Do not imagine that you must be perfect, that if you should fall into sin again that you will perish everlasting. I fear from what I have heard some think in this way, grounding their wrong notions upon not understanding that passage, "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." This passage occurs in the 11th chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, and through wrong notions respecting it, many who have been otherwise inclined to honour their Lord by presenting themselves at His table have through fear absented themselves. It is my intention, therefore, should it please God to spare my life and give me health to preach to you upon that very text next Sunday, and it will be my endeavour, by God's blessing, to give you a more correct idea of what the Apostle Paul, when writing to the Corinthians, really intended to say in those words. If you will pray to God for the guidance of His Spirit, and patiently read that chapter, you will see that it was far from the Apostle's intention to make people suppose that if they partook of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper unworthily, therefore upon that account their souls would perish everlasting, that their

case would be altogether desperate, even though they wished to turn unto God with a hearty repentance. You will see that he blamed the Corinthians to whom he was writing, for eating and drinking to excess when they professed to be partaking of the Lord's Supper ; for making it an occasion of drunkenness and gluttony, and disorder, but as we give the bread and wine in such very small portions, there can be no reason to suppose that we shall ever transgress in the same way. At the same time we may commit sin if we partake of it unworthily, and therefore we are exhorted to prepare ourselves, and directions are given us upon this point in the Prayer Book immediately after the Prayer for the Church Militant, which as most of you I hope know is in the Communion Service immediately after the Belief read at the Communion Table. And if the directions there given do not satisfy you and you cannot understand them I beseech you to come to me, and by God's help I will endeavour to make your minds easy and strengthen you in your good resolutions. But above all things, ask of God the assistance of His Holy Spirit—ask in the name of Jesus Christ and ask in faith. God Himself will teach you to prepare, if you go to Him as humble and contrite Sinners, looking only for forgiveness and acceptance through Christ Jesus.

And now what shall I say to those who are unwilling to accept of the invitation which God gives in the Text? My brethren, I could wish devoutly that there were not such persons to be found. Does it not seem almost unaccountable, does it not seem truly wonderful that any set of persons should refuse to be snatched out of hellfire and carried on the wings of divine love to

heaven? One might have expected that the mere selfish nature of man would have taught him better things. But that accursed Spirit which tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit still tempts us and whispers in our ear, “*Ye shall not surely die.” And we too often fall into the snare and make all sorts of excuses for our weakness and unwillingness to be saved. Every one is ready to offer excuses for his unwillingness, and while some civilly beg to be excused others roughly answer, “I cannot come.” But whatever be our excuse, and in whatsoever way it be offered, the all-seeing eye of God sees in a moment that it is but an excuse. Indeed the very persons who refuse God’s call to pardon and acceptance know that their excuse will avail them nothing in the day of judgment. What folly, then, is it to offer that in justification of ourselves now, which will serve only to condemn us in the last day! Let us not deceive ourselves in such a foolish way. We may give to the world and our family a due portion of care: but let nothing keep us from that heavenly feast which God has prepared for us in His dear Son. Our Lord Himself has declared that “†Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” May the Holy Spirit impress this upon every soul here present. May He cause this to dwell in our hearts and enable us by His blessed help to give up all things for the glory of God, who so loved us that he gave us His only begotten Son to die for us, therein giving us the strongest proof of His love, and promising to us that whosoever believeth in Him, i.e., whosoever lives to Him and receives him with

* Gen. iii, 4. † Luke xiv, 26, 27.

all his heart, living to God not only in word but in deed, should not perish but have everlasting life. Oh, may God in His infinite mercy enable us all like the holy Paul, to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

SERMON X. ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

2 Kings, Chap. v., Verse 13.

And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My Father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?

IT certainly must be confessed to be no easy thing for a man to discharge all the duties of a real Christian. It is no easy thing, in our daily conduct, in our goings out and comings in, at all times, and upon all occasions, to maintain a constant deportment as Christians. The temptations which beset us are so many, the circumstances in which we may be placed are so various, and, often so *trying*, that nothing less than the grace of God in our hearts, and the Spirit of God upholding us, can sustain us in a really Christian course. But what is still more to be lamented is that strange disinclination, which even comparatively good men shew, to discharge duties so easy and acceptable to God. Of this we see a lamentable instance in the frequent neglect of the Lord's Supper. What can be more *easy*, more *delightful*, more *exalting*, than to sit down at the Holy Supper of our Lord, and to partake of that bread broken, and that wine poured forth, in *remembrance* of His sacred body broken, and His precious blood shed for the redemption of our souls? And yet *how few*

seem anxious to avail themselves of this privilege ! How many make difficulties, and delay, on sundry vain excuses, their coming to this heavenly banquet ! Now to such I would say—Would you be pleased if I were to tell you that you were not Christians ? And yet in a manner, as far as you are interested in being partakers of the most holy rite of your religion, you declare yourselves, by your absence from it, as not true and obedient followers of the Lord Jesus, who, almost with His dying words, enjoined you to “do this in remembrance of Him.” Think of one of the last commands of your Lord, my brethren, and ask yourselves if you would not have been anxious to perform it, had it been some great and difficult thing ? Think of it, and consider how utterly inexcusable your conduct is when He requires you to eat of bread and drink of wine in remembrance of His death, and you disobey, you refuse to observe so easy, so agreeable a command ! If you are indeed sincere followers of the Lord Jesus, if you are prepared to die, you are prepared to be partakers of that holy ordinance; and if you are not so prepared, your case is indeed dreadful, and you have need to prepare yourselves without a moment’s delay. Think then of these things and be wise to-day, while it is called to-day—before night cometh, when no man can work.

I have been led into these preliminary remarks by frequently reflecting upon the spiritual state of many of my Parishioners, and the earnest desire I see in many persons in other respects to do their duty to God. And when I see them thus desirous of being what they ought to be, and call to mind their unaccountable back-

wardness in coming to the Lord's Supper, my mind recurs to the words of the text—"My Father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much more then, when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean ?

These words of the text were the words which the Servants of Naaman addressed to their Master, when from want of proper faith in the Prophet of God, and therefore from want of proper faith in God Himself, he refused to do as the Prophet told him and to wash himself in Jordan that his leprosy might be cleansed.

Connecting what he thought the means with the end, or in other words, making that sad but common mistake, applying human reasoning to divine things, when at the same time, he looked for a miracle, he expected the Prophet to come forth and perform the cure in the way that he might think proper. He deemed "Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel," and therefore more likely to give him relief than the despised stream of the sacred Jordan. Instead of looking to the power of God alone, as the means of effecting a miraculous cure, he seems to have expected that the Prophet would take some visible, but mysterious course. He seems evidently not to have expected the divine interference without something being done by man to call it forth. In fact, he had carved out for himself a certain method, *through which* he was, as *he* thought, to obtain the blessing that he sought. Instead of obeying the command of the Minister of God, and showing honour to the Lord by a simple and confiding obedience,

he must not only obtain the favours which he asked, but obtain it too *in the way he wished*. This conduct of the unenlightened Naaman may seem unreasonable, but it is the very course which we Christians too often pursue. It was more excusable in Naaman than it can possibly be in us. We are taught the knowledge of the true God from our youth, but he had lived amongst a people who knew not God, but in their ignorance worshipped they knew not what. We come to God for the salvation of our souls, and gladly would we obtain the happiness of heaven, but then every one would obtain that happiness by means of, or in a way of, their own choosing. One would adopt a life of pleasure, and yet hope at the close of many years to find himself safe on the way to heaven, with a soul sanctified and his affections set on things above, not on things on earth. Another, who has spent all his best days in impure gratifications, such as drunkenness, fornication, and licentious desires, would gladly, no doubt, when at the point of death, find out that he was washed from all his uncleanness, and safe through the precious blood of the Lord Jesus. Another, who has all his life-time been raking up money and aiming at aggrandizing himself or his family, when departing from this world, and begining to see the utter helplessness of all his wealth to save his soul, would no doubt be more happy to be among those who have a goodly list, £20,000 worth of good deeds, of pious deeds, to offer to their Lord, rather than be among those who have much wealth—£20,000—to give to their relations, but nothing to show that they have zealously served their

heavenly Master. All of us no doubt would like to go to heaven, but then what we most desire is to go there each in his own way—to have our desires and gratifications in this world, and then heaven itself and all its glories in the next. Like Naaman, we would be cleansed from the leprosy of sin, but cleansed in *our own way*. **But be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

It is as I have before said difficult always to maintain a christian course, but still it is wonderful how often we fail in things in themselves quite easy. And the secret seems to be this, that we do not give up fully, unreservedly, all to God. God requires that we should give up all to Him. This we find a difficulty in doing. We still make secret reserves in the midst of all our good resolutions. Doubtless Adam led an easy, happy life in Paradise, and we may suppose that he loved God, and looked up to Him as *his Father and his Friend*. He had but one command to observe in token of his obedience. Among so many fruits so freely offered and given him for enjoyment and use, only one was forbidden. Yet easy as this condition seemed to be, he found it difficult to resist temptation, and broke the only law which God had given him. Easy as it may seem to us to abstain from many fruits, easy as it might have been no doubt for Adam, disobedience against the one command was his curse, disobedience alas ! too freely

imitated by all his erring children, and now transmitted as a constant and hereditary mark of his fallen family. And what have been the consequences of this disobedience? ruin, ruin to the body as well as to the soul! On every kindred and on every nation of Adam's unnumbered posterity is written as with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond, lamentation, punishment, wailing and woe. Think of this ye who make light of the Lord's command, “*Do this in remembrance of me.” Think of this, ye who turn your backs regardless of the blessed invitation to come to the Lord's Supper. Remember that it is no great thing, no grand work or labour requiring great talent, opportunity, or unusual zeal that the Lord requires. No! He simply requires you to come as sincere believers in Jesus, with faith and repentance in your hearts and the preparation of prayer and a holy life, such a life as every good christian ought to be living, even if there were no Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. “†And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul?” Can you be said to love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul when you disobey one of the last commands of His beloved Son? Will you keep the birthday of one of your relations with joy and gladness, and yet refuse to keep in memory the death and sufferings of Him who suffered to redeem you from eternal death? Even if it had been some difficult thing which the Lord had required of you, would you have

* Luke xxii, 19.

† Deut. x, 12.

not done it? How much more when He says “*Eat this bread and drink this wine in memory of my body broken and my blood poured out for you?” The road to heaven, thanks to the boundless goodness of God, lies open to the rich and the poor, to the learned and the unlearned. There are no difficulties which will not soon disappear if you will but give God your hearts. “†My Son give me thine heart,” is the language of God to us all. Give God your hearts and you will soon be fit partakers, under the Divine blessing, at the Lord’s Table, as far as human beings can be fit in this probationary state. Do not imagine to your minds that God is a tyrant. No! He is a tender, a forgiving Father in Christ Jesus. He “‡wouldest not the death of a sinner but §rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live. He pardoneth and releaseth from their sins all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe His holy gospel.” Yes, dear brethren, do not suppose that because the unrepentant sinner must suffer the penalty or punishment that his sins deserve, do not suppose that though this be the case, if you turn unto the Lord with all your hearts, truly repenting of your past sins, and steadfastly purposing to lead a new life, do not suppose that the Lord will refuse to receive you as a kind and forgiving Father. He knoweth that we are but dust. He knoweth that we are compassed with infirmity, and therefore, if we turn not a deaf ear to His remonstrances, but confess and forsake our sins, He will be willing again and again to receive us. Though when

* Matt. xxvi., 26, 27. † Prov. xxiii., 28.

‡ Communion Service, “Wouldest not the death of a sinner.”

§ Collect for Absolution.

we wish to present ourselves at the Lord's table we may be fearful of adding to our offences by presenting ourselves in an unworthy state, we ought not to let these fears get the better of our sense of duty. It is, it must be confessed, to be our duty to be present often when we have an opportunity at the Lord's Supper. If we absent ourselves we disobey His commands: and ought we not be as fearful of doing this as of presenting ourselves unworthily. Let us throw ourselves, like David, on the mercy of God. If we are not so good as we could wish to be, let us come to this holy ordinance with the best preparation which for the present we can make; and let us hope that while we draw near in faith and trust in the all-sufficient merits of Christ, we shall grow in grace and daily receive fresh supplies of strength* till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

I have repeatedly had occasion to observe that some of you seem willing enough to come to the Sacrament of Baptism, whilst you appear to draw back from the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. You should bear in mind that before you bring your children to be baptized, you who are Sponsors, or Godfathers and Godmothers, ought to prepare yourselves by frequent prayer and a deep consideration of the duties which you are about to undertake. I would have you prepared for both Sacraments, for the Sacrament of Baptism and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. I have repeatedly brought up the subject in this place—God grant that I may not bring it up in

* Ephesians iv., 13.

vain. Whilst you are so anxious to be properly prepared for the Lord's Supper, do not forget to be equally prepared both as Sponsors and as Christians, for the duties to which you pledge yourselves at the Baptismal Font.

As an inducement to incline your hearts to these considerations let me mention one or two more observations. The love of God ought to be a sufficient inducement with all of you to be sincere partakers of both Sacraments: the great things which our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has done for us ought so to excite our gratitude that we should need no other motive to do His will. And O ! my dear brethren, if you do not feel this now, surely when you come to die, if you have any adequate sense of His goodness, you will lament that you have not done your duty better. This was actually the case with a near neighbour of mine, who died a short time since. Yes, he could look back with satisfaction to a life spent well in many respects, and God had blessed his industry. But still it was painful to him to reflect how often he had neglected the Supper of our Lord, and how, to use his own expression, "*he had slunk*" out like a man ashamed of himself, ashamed of turning his back on his blessed Lord. Other instances of bitter regret too late I could easily enumerate, but, my brethren, in a word, be prepared. Remember the words of God Himself,† "Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

† 1 Samuel, c. ii. v. 30.

SERMON XI.

T H E C R U C I F I X I O N .

St. Matthew, Chap. xxvii. v. 54.

Truly this was the Son of God.

“**H**E *came unto His own and His own received Him not” was never more strikingly and truly verified than when the Roman Centurion gave utterance to the words of the text. There hung the body of the blessed Saviour of mankind, abandoned by that human soul which had just quitted it for Paradise—there it hung, that body that had been scourged, wounded, pierced, nailed to the cross, the object of derision to His implacable enemies, His infatuated countrymen, whose hearts, swollen with rancour and steeled with insensibility, were not only proof against all compassion, but shut up the eyes of their understanding in the face of the most astounding facts. Whilst they wilfully, and with unparalleled obstinacy, closed their eyes against the most convincing evidence, that Roman officer and his soldiers, upon whom devolved the painful duty of superintending the execution of the innocent Jesus and the two malefactors, overwhelmed by the accumulation of portentous events,—the earthquake, the supernatural darkness, the

* John i, 11.

meek, patient and forgiving temper of our blessed Lord under that cruel, that unjust and impious treatment,—he and “they that were with him feared greatly, saying, “Truly this was the Son of God.” It has been said that they made this exclamation not understanding what they said, and, probably, amidst such a scene of wonder and excitement, under such stupendous circumstances, they did not know what those words meant in their fullest sense. But have we not here evidence of the conviction that took possession of their minds ? Have we not here the spontaneous expression of their own unbiassed judgment ? Doubtless they knew full well what the crime was with which our Lord was charged—the crime of blasphemy. Therefore, seeing that in the face of this assertion that He was the Son of God, the very elements bore testimony to the truth of it, while the whole frame of nature was quivering before the frown of its God, they yielded to their own unprejudiced convictions and exclaimed, “This was a righteous man, truly this was the Son of God.”

To us living at a distance of 1800 years after that time when this exclamation was made, these solemn words are full of awful warning—

First they warn us against the tremendous peril to which we expose ourselves by yielding to our passions and suffering our prejudices to get the better of our judgement. For here in the most astounding event that ever took place since the creation of the universe, we see the rulers of an enlightened people, a people so eminently blessed that they were called the peculiar people of God, yet the chief men of these people we see

rejecting their own prophecies, turning a deaf ear to reason, though addressed to them by one who spake as never man spake, and hurrying themselves and their devoted families headlong into eternal ruin. In vain did the unrighteous Judge remonstrate with them, and declare that he “*could find no fault” in the blessed Jesus. Their minds filled with envy, carried them so impetuously forward that in their desire to gratify their own malice they forgot what was due to the dignity of their own characters, and stooped to the basest means to accomplish their own ends. The charge against our Lord was that He said He was the Son of God, but finding that they were not likely to prevail on Pilate to put Him to death on that charge, they insinuated that He had set up a kingdom, and declared that they had no king but Cæsar. Thus working upon Pilate’s fears and jealousy, they thought to drive him to commit that horrid wickedness and to consign the innocent to the most shameful death. And when even they thought, that he might be still released by the tardy mercy of the conscience-stricken judge, who had been accustomed to set at liberty one prisoner, they persuaded the people to ask for †Barabbas and preferred a robber and a murderer to the sinless Saviour. So strong, so violent and unreasonable had their passions become, that they would neither allow themselves nor others to form a correct judgment. Satan, the god of this world had taken full possession of their hearts. Through them he bruised the heel of the Messiah, and fulfilled the prophecies which they might find in their own Scriptures. And all this was done of

* John’s Gospel, xix., 6. † John xviii., 40.

their own free will. They were not compelled by any inevitable decree to crucify our Lord. They were led on by their own bad prejudices, under the influence of that Evil Spirit, whose hour it was, and the Power of darkness.

We may learn too from the words brought before us and the events that led to their utterance, how the greatest blessings may be turned into the greatest curses.

For here was a people in the possession and enjoyment, if they made proper use of it, of the greatest of treasures, the veritable Word of God. Here was a people, who were the stewards of the oracles of God, who gloried in the distinguishing favour of God, as exhibited to their nation through thousands of years, and yet in possession of those great and glorious privileges, these very people loved darkness rather than light. In them was exemplified the prophecy of Isaiah, in chap. vi., verse 9, 10, "Hearing they did not understand, and seeing they did not perceive." The Roman soldiers, having never had the benefit probably of being instructed in the Jewish Scriptures, yet free from their prejudices, were open to conviction, and "feared greatly." Of one, and he was their chief, the centurion, we read in St. Luke's Gospel, that "he glorified God," probably by confessing his sins and deprecating the vengeance of God as well as exclaiming "This was a righteous man." And yet of those same soldiers we read, that, only a short time before, they loaded our Lord with insults, derision and cruelty. We have no good reason for concluding that the hearts of these men were entirely changed, but still we may reasonably conclude that this

conviction terminated in the conversion at least of some of them, and perhaps of the very persons who nailed our beloved Saviour to the cross ; according to this prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

But what a glorious testimony was given in those words to the Messiahship of Christ ! His own countrymen would not admit for one moment that He was the Son of God. They raved at the bare idea. But unenlightened heathens, ferocious, hardhearted men, inured to danger and accustomed to face death in its most frightful shapes, men too, gathered from distant and barbarous nations, quailed at the awful sight, and freely confessed that this person, whose death had just taken place, could be no ordinary mortal, that "He was the Son of God." This testimony was the more valuable, as it was evidently the result of an impression wrought in their own minds, then and there, free, unbiassed by any considerations connected with this world, and therefore the offspring of a true, disinterested, overwhelming conviction. The clamour of the Jews, the threats of His enemies, could not close the eyes of these men against the unblemished innocence, the sublime piety, the divine compassion and the God-like resignation of the dying Saviour. These characteristics of the blessed Jesus could not be forgotten when heaven and earth appeared to join in avenging His unjust and cruel death. Bold as the Roman soldiers were, and accustomed to frightful scenes, they were no match for these more than mortal terrors. And if we had any historic account of the private feelings of those unrelenting Jews, we should find, doubtless, that their fears at that time were such as will possess the

souls of His enemies, when that same mighty Saviour shall come in flaming fire to take vengeance on those that know not God and obey not the Gospel of His blessed Son.

But that this subject may be made profitable to us, let me ask if the language of the Roman Centurion has always been the language of our hearts? I fear, dear brethren, that if we deal strictly with ourselves and impartially examine our own hearts, that we shall find that we have often trodden in the steps of the Jews, that we have been among the enemies of our Lord. Yes!—our sins nailed him to that accursed tree. It was not the Roman Guard that kept him there. With *twelve legions of angels He could have swept them and the Jews and Jerusalem itself into the ocean of His fury. But if we were to be saved it was not possible for that bitter “†cup” to pass from him. No; it must be drunk to the very dregs. Jesus must suffer and die, or we all must perish everlasting. Have we thought of this, and have our meditations on it been constantly so directed that we have been always ready to exclaim, “Truly this was the Son of God?” Has the Holy Spirit made our hearts “‡His temple,” and taken of the things of Jesus and shown them unto us? Has He pleaded with us with unutterable “§groanings?” Has He laboured to bring us to that only fountain still open for all uncleanness? Too many it is to be feared, still tread in the path of the Jews—still join His enemies. We do, if we do not value Him as we ought; and who

* Matt. xxvi., 58.

† Luke xxii., 42.

‡ Romans viii., 26.

§ 1 Cor. vi., 19.

does value the Saviour as He ought to be valued? If we loved Him as we ought to do we should behold Him as "fairer than ten thousand, and altogether lovely." The language of our hearts would be, not only "Truly this is the Son of God," but also, "*Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee?" But how few are there who thus "†count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord." And yet those who do not thus esteem Him, in reality undervalue and despise Him.

How common is it for men to build up a scheme of salvation for themselves, and what is this but to rob him of his glory and of the office which he came to execute? Christ is as jealous of His glory as our Redeemer as the Lord God of the Hebrews was of his as their Creator. The peculiar, the incommunicable glory of Christ is, that He and He alone opens the door of salvation to fallen man. "†There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." "§I," said he, "if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me." Shall not this be verified in us? At the very time of His crucifixion He showed the truth of this assertion. He converted the dying thief and took him that very day to dwell with Him in Paradise as an example of His Almighty grace, and as a monument of His redeeming love. Nor had He long poured out His soul unto death, when lo! other converts were born unto God. Those Roman soldiers

* Psalm lxxiii., 25.

† Phil. iii., 8.

§ John xii., 32.

‡ Acts iv., 12.

with their commander who stood over against the cross of Jesus, yielded to their own convictions and exclaimed, "Truly this was the Son of God." And shall the truth of his claims be admitted by these barbarous, these untutored men, and not acknowledged by us? Doubtless the conduct of those Roman soldiers is an eternal testimony against the wickedness, the impiety, the obduracy of the unbelieving Jews. But both Jews and Romans will be swift witnesses against us, if with such evidence as we possess in the Gospel, we be not found in Christ; if we fly not to Him and seek safety only in and through Him, shut up in Him as it were like the *Israelites protected in their houses in Egypt from the hand of the Destroying Angel, or like Noah enclosed in the ark and thus saved amidst a world of wickedness from the deluge of God's wrath.

While meditating upon the solemn words of the text we may observe, how it sometimes happens, that those who possess the highest religious privileges, are after all the farthest removed from God. The Almighty in His great goodness had vouchsafed to the Jews high and holy privileges, fenced them in with ordinances and institutions from the rest of mankind, and had chosen them as His peculiar people, and yet they had become altogether estranged from His plans and gracious designs, and fallen into ways of their own choosing. Instead of being under the influence of the Spirit of holiness they had become the willing slaves of the Spirit of evil. Even the chief men among them, the priests and rulers, who, from their position might have been expected to be zealous for the truth,

* Exodus xii. 23.

were, with the exception of Nicodemus and probably a very few others, foremost in persecuting Jesus, and stirring up others also to do the same. The Roman soldiers, who were placed among them for military purposes, showed themselves, at least some of them, not only upon this occasion, but at several other times, alive to the superiority of the Jewish religion, and as we know more than once thankfully profited by it, as far as they had power to do so. Now the privileges which the Jews possessed, their better opportunities and the greater light they enjoyed, add mightily to the charge against them. If it be true, and true most assuredly it is, that each of us will be judged according to the talents which he has possessed, the responsibility of the Jews must have been greatly aggravated by their superior advantages. And so it will be with us. We have even greater advantages than the Jews had. We have the happiness of living in an age when Gospel truth is proclaimed in all its fullness and freedom. You, even the meanest, the most uneducated, have the privilege of seeing what “*many prophets and righteous men ardently desired to see, and did not see.” You have the Lord Jesus preached unto you fully, plainly, and I trust, effectually. Have you benefited as you ought to have done?

Is the language of your hearts, day by day and night by night, “Truly this is the son of God?” Are His great, His unspeakable merits ever present in your minds, and are you at all aware in the slightest degree of the boundless, the inestimable debt you owe unto Him for thus dying in your stead, and delivering you from

everlasting death? If you have any idea adequate to, or in the slightest degree worthy of the greatness of this mercy, you will surely show forth your sense of it by your thankfulness, by your repentance, and by your conformity to His wishes.

For every creature let this text suffice;
The cross once seen is death to every vice.

Dear brethren, this is the first time I address some of you—it may be the last time I shall have an opportunity of speaking to some upon the subject. Let me not close, then, without the expression of a hope that when we come to die, the Holy Ghost may bring those solemn words home to our hearts, “Truly this was the Son of God.” Then, at that awful hour, when all the resources of this world, when every human prop snaps asunder, may the Holy Ghost enable us to feel and own Him to be our Saviour. May that Divine Spirit lead us to know Him and the power of His resurrection. To be prepared for this, we must open our hearts and invite the King of Glory to come in. In the hour of His agony there was one poor *wretch who repented at the last moment and was saved—the dying thief!

But that same mighty Saviour who thought proper to signalize the day of His great sacrifice by this astonishing grace, has declared that “†Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven,” thereby showing that a preparation, that obedience, that a life of vital godliness is necessary, indispensably necessary, if we would be found among His

* Luke xxiii, 42. † Matt. vii, 21.

people at the last great day. Oh, let this great truth then be engraven on your hearts, that “*Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” Let it be your daily study so to walk before Him that at whatsoever hour He may call you, you may be prepared. This is the only true wisdom. “†Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning ; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching.”

* Heb. xii., 14. † Luke xii., 35, 36, 37.

Now to God the Father, &c.

SERMON XII. ON THE RESURRECTION.

St. John v., Verses 28, 29.

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

IF we were not so repeatedly and plainly told by our blessed Lord that there will be a resurrection of the body, it might be open to dispute whether our bodies would rise again from their graves. But in the text I have just read to you, all doubt upon the point is entirely removed if we are real believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and believe the Scripture to be the word of God. Eminent men have been found who would dispute about this doctrine. The Sadducees, as we know, altogether denied the truth of it; and, in later times, I can remember a distinguished member of the Lower House of Parliament getting up and taunting people, when they talked about the last day, for speaking upon a subject of which they could know but little. However little we know upon this awful subject, we know enough from what our Lord Himself says and from Revelation generally, to inspire the bad with terror, and the good with hope. I have observed, too, that those who discourage all conversation or even thought about a future judgment are those who, from a sense of their own sins, are desirous to avoid the subject altogether. Some, again,

try to mitigate or qualify the results of the dreaded judgment by reasoning that though the happiness of the good will be eternal, the misery of the bad will not be eternal. Such persons generally have no great attainments as Greek scholars. If they studied the Greek Testament, they would find the same Greek word which they are willing should be rendered "eternal" when applied to the happiness of the good, is used when speaking of the punishment of the bad—that it also shall be eternal. If, therefore, it be rendered rightly, which it is in the sense of eternal in the one case, it must be equally so in the other. We are, I trust, in the number of those who believe in the saving of the soul, and therefore, in what I am about to say I shall speak to you as believers in the great fundamental doctrine of our holy religion—the resurrection of the body from the grave and the reunion of that body with the soul in the last day. And may God, in His great mercy, give us the help of His Holy Spirit that I may speak and you may hear to our eternal benefit.

When our Lord in the text says, "the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice," it is plain that He is speaking of the bodies of the dead, which re-united to their souls shall rise again at his command. The souls are not in the graves. They are for a time, till the day of general judgment, in another place, as we know from those striking words of our Lord to the dying thief on the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise;*" as also from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus†

* Luke xxiii. 43. † Luke xvi. 19.

and other passages of scripture. The body of the dead thief, crucified with our Lord, was left on earth, but his soul had gone to another world. We see with our eyes where we deposit the dead bodies of our friends, each in his respective grave, but their souls are gone beyond our knowledge and reach. When our Lord speaks of the resurrection, He always speaks with a view to the resurrection of the body and the re-union of the soul with the body. Thus in Mark xii., in that curious discussion which the Sadducees had with our Lord, asking whose wife shall the woman be after the resurrection, seeing that she had been the wife of seven brethren in succession, both parties acted upon the supposition that the body must rise from the grave, and our Lord graciously condescended to reason with them, showing them their error by referring to the Book of Moses, that part of the Old Testament which all sects among the Jews looked up to as of the highest authority, however much they under-valued the other parts of the Old Testament. Though the instructions which our Lord gave to the people were always more or less conducive to their temporal welfare, yet it is plain that His discourses were delivered mainly with a view to the glory of God and the salvation of His people, and that salvation necessarily involved the redemption of both soul and body.

Speaking of himself, in John ii. 19, He says, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." "But," adds the Evangelist, in the 21st verse, "He spake of the temple of His body." In the 36th verse of the 4th chapter of St. John's Gospel, we read,

“And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal : that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.” If the soul alone inherited immortality and the body were left to perish everlastingily on the earth, I apprehend, this description would hardly be considered as appropriate. It seems to point to a consummation far more complete, to the resurrection of the body and the re-union of the soul with the body, and the whole individual thus enjoying a triumph in heaven with his Lord and Saviour for ever. “This is the Father’s will which hath sent me,”* says our Lord, in the 6th chapter of St. John’s Gospel, “that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.” Taken in their natural sense, these words are sufficient to show that the body must rise again from the grave. Our Lord made the truths of his gospel to depend upon the truths of his own resurrection. He repeatedly challenged the obdurate Jews by appeals to his own resurrection, and if that could be disproved, our holy religion would be proved to be an imposture. Thanks be to God, the truth of this great fundamental doctrine is placed above all doubt. It is proved by the testimony of men and angels, of friends and foes, and what is infinitely of more importance, by the testimony of our Lord himself. “† I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore.” Now his resurrection was the pattern of our resurrection. As therefore He rose from the dead and resumed his human form, so also shall we reappear at his command and “come forth,

they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

The teaching of the Apostles all proceeded upon the ground that the human body would rise from the grave and enjoy happiness in heaven with their Lord. Thus St. John, in the 2nd verse of the 3rd chapter of his 1st Epistle writes, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." In that well-known chapter which forms a portion of the Funeral Service, the xvth chapter of 1 Cor., St. Paul strikingly points out the folly and presumption of those who dispute, because they cannot tell "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come." Our bodies no doubt will have undergone a wonderful change, because they will be glorified and fitted for celestial mansions and for eternity, but our identity will be preserved. Such was the case with Christ's glorified body after He had risen from the dead. It was manifestly the same body in which He had been crucified, and in which He had died, because "He shewed the print of the nails and His pierced side," and yet it had undergone a wonderful change. It was still human in the fullest sense, and exercised human functions, such as eating, speaking, walking, handling, seeing, breathing. Still it was very different from any other human body of which we have any knowledge, because it entered the room where the Apostles were assembled, though the doors were shut, and stood in the midst of them. Upon another occasion

we read that when our Lord had accompanied two of His people on the road to Emmaus, when He had convinced them that He was the Christ, “*He vanished out of their sight,” or disappeared altogether. The doctrine of the resurrection might be shown to be not only reasonable, but in the highest degree probable, from analogy, reasoning from what we see in the natural world, and I might go into a long intricate argument, were it necessary, to confirm your faith. Considering, however, that I am addressing a body of believers, who I trust receive the Scriptures as the Word of God, and build their hopes upon those Scriptures, I conceive I shall make better use of our time, by calling your attention to the second part of our Text—“The hour is coming,” says the Text, “in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation!” Seeing that these things shall in the time appointed by the wisdom of Almighty God assuredly come to pass, “† what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God.” Brethren, who shall stand when He appeareth? Who will be prepared for this dread ordeal? Alas! even the best amongst us cannot stand even upon our merits before that God, in whose eyes “the heavens are unclean and who chargeth His angels with folly.” But thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift. We have a Saviour, a Redeemer, a Daysman who can stand between God and man. He who will be our Judge is now our Mediator. He has

* Luke xxiv., 31.

† 2 Peter, iii. 11.

offered an atonement sufficient for the greatest of sinners, of which we can all avail ourselves with the help of God's Holy Spirit. Seek then that help without delay. That atonement will only be available to those who take advantage of it in their day of grace. Oh, let us flee to that fountain still open for all uncleanness. Let us beg of Him to wash away all our iniquities in His most precious blood. It was for repentant sinners that He suffered in *Gethsemane, and died upon Calvary. And great as our sins may be, infinite in number, grievous in character and weight, His most precious blood can blot †them all out of the Book of God's remembrance. Let us then, with the help of the Holy Ghost, seek acceptance at God's hands only through his merits, and let us not suppose that we can ever enter heaven by any merits of our own. Not only must we seek for forgiveness of all our sins through the atonement which our blessed Lord has made for us, but we must look to Him to clothe us in "‡His righteousness" if we would stand in the day of trial. And blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto God for this great, this unspeakable provision of love and mercy. We, my brethren, could never dare, could never presume to stand in the presence of the Eternal in our natural wretchedness and nakedness. Had we not an elder brother to lift us from the depths of despair, and place us in His presence, as those to whom it is His Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom, we should be in a state hopeless indeed. "§ But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." That grave, upon the edge of which we might have stood

* Matt. xxvi. 36, &c. † 1 John i. 7. ‡ Phil. iii. 9. § Eph. ii. 13.

with a shudder of despair and horror, had we not this blessed revelation, may now be regarded as the gate to a blissful eternity. Our Redeemer has stripped it of its terrors. Through Him we can now triumphantly exclaim, “*O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ?”

This happy state of mind pre-supposes that we are living such lives as become the real followers and believers in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; that we not only repent but show the sincerity of our repentance by consistent conduct ; that “†Our hearts condemn us not,” but that in all simplicity and godliness we have our conversation in the world. And remember, dear brethren, that each man’s religion rests between God and himself. A man may be everything that he thinks he ought to be in the sight of the world, but not acceptable in the sight of God. God, and God alone looks into the heart ; therefore all mere profession, all self-delusion, all attempts to justify himself upon his fancied merits, must utterly fail before God. The naked, unvarnished, unadorned truth, however painful to the individual, must stand revealed in its real character before the all-seeing eye. Among ourselves we may go on putting “‡Darkness for light and light for darkness ; bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter,” but all such error, such deception is utterly useless when we come to our great and final account, and it can only add to our confusion and misery. Let us therefore, while we have time, view things as we shall wish we had viewed them when we come to die, and thus be with the help of God’s Holy Spirit, and through the merits of Christ, prepared for our great change.

* 1 Cor., xv., 55. † 1 John, iii., 21. ‡ Isaiah v., 20.

MORNING HYMN.

Daylight gleams in eastern skies,
From the bed of sloth arise,
Haste to thank the Lord, and pray,
God has sent another day.

We have slumber'd safe and sure
By the care of God secure,
And to Him for all your days.
Pay the tribute of your praise.

Holy Spirit, shine within,
Raise us from this life of sin,
Guide us through the coming day,
Drive all wicked thoughts away.

Rise, thou Morning Star divine,
Root and Branch of David's line,
Power o'er all to Thee is given,*
Usher in the day of Heaven.

God the Father, from above
Send this day new proofs of love,
Every day is Thine, and we
Grateful live this day to Thee.

Many souls ere morning light
Far from hence have wing'd their flight;
We by God's rich mercy still
Here are spared to do His will.

Thanks to Thee, O God our King,
Night and morning we would sing :
All we owe no tongue can tell,
Thou hast loved, and loved so well !

Glorious is the rising sun ;
Sweet the breath of day begun ;
Beauteous is the landscape fair
Clothed in light and fragrant air :

But far greater joys they prove,
Who have tasted of His love,
Sought the Lord, and found Him near
Ever willing prayer to hear.

Praise to Thee, O God most High,
Praise from ocean, earth and sky,
Praise from every soul to Thee,
Praise through all eternity.

* *St. Matthew xxviii., v. 18.*

MORNING HYMN.

Day - light gleams in eas - tern skies,

From the bed of sloth a - rise,

Haste to thank the Lord and pray,

God has sent a - no - ther day.

The Music for these original Hymns has been composed specially for this work by Signor Lanza.

(T)

MORNING HYMN.

Daylight gleams in eastern skies,
From the bed of sloth arise,
Haste to thank the Lord, and pray,
God has sent another day.

We have slumber'd safe and sure
By the care of God secure,
And to Him for all your days.
Pay the tribute of your praise.

Holy Spirit, shine within,
Raise us from this life of sin,
Guide us through the coming day,
Drive all wicked thoughts away.

Rise, thou Morning Star divine,
Root and Branch of David's line,
Power o'er all to Thee is given,*
Usher in the day of Heaven.

God the Father, from above
Send this day new proofs of love,
Every day is Thine, and we
Grateful live this day to Thee.

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We by God's rich mercy still
Here are spared to do His will.

Thanks to Thee, O God our King,
Night and morning we would sing :
All we owe no tongue can tell,
Thou hast loved, and loved so well !

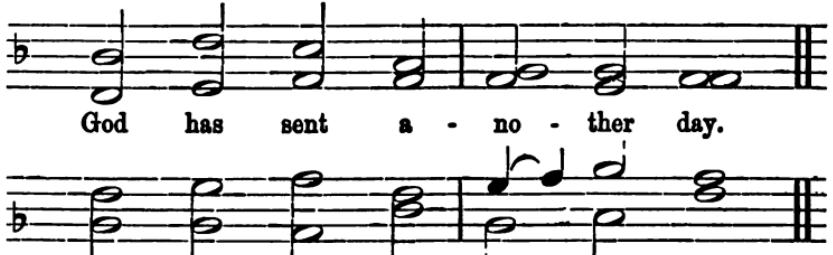
Glorious is the rising sun ;
Sweet the breath of day begun ;
Beauteous is the landscape fair
Clothed in light and fragrant air :

But far greater joys they prove,
Who have tasted of His love,
Sought the Lord, and found Him near
Ever willing prayer to hear.

Praise to Thee, O God most High,
Praise from ocean, earth and sky,
Praise from every soul to Thee,
Praise through all eternity.

* *St. Matthew xxviii., v. 18.*

MORNING HYMN.



Music for these original Hymns has been composed specially for this work by Signor Aspa.

(T)

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7

EVENING HYMN.

Soft the shades of eve draw nigh,

Twi - light glim - mers in the sky,

Twinkling stars be - gin to shine;

Rise, my soul, to things di - vine.

NOW OR NEVER.

"WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT."—*Eph. v. 8.*

Now or never must we fight :
Shun the darkness, seek the light.
Once ye darkness were, and sin
Darken'd all the light within.
Walk ye children of the Lord,
In the full blaze of His word—

Walk in faith : to you 'tis given
Earth to quit and enter heaven.
Such high destiny is yours ;
Such a triumph Christ assures.
He has paid the price, and He
Rescues from sin's penalty.

Surely past times may suffice
To have walk'd in sin and vice ;
Surely now my God may claim
Every effort of my frame :
May I to His glory live
And in death my witness give.

NOW OR NEVER.

With Spirit.

Now or ne- ver must we fight; Shun the darkness,

seek the light. Once ye darkness were, and sin

Darken'd all the light within. Walk, ye children

of the Lord, In the full blaze of His word—

HYMN FOR THE NATIVITY.

Sing, ye angels of the morn,
 Sing this day the Virgin-born,
 Lo, at length the Prince of Peace
 Comes His people to release.

Once ye sang* of heaven and earth
 Crown'd with beauty at their birth :
 Now let greater themes of joy
 All your heavenly harps employ.

Children all of Adam, rise,
 Join the chorus of the skies :
 Hark ! the heavens around us ring ;
 Hail the advent of your King !

Christ is born, the promised Word,
 Christ, our Priest, Redeemer, Lord :
 He whom hosts of God obey
 Comes in human garb this day.

Children of a fallen race,
 Glad the gift foretold embrace :
 Satan from his throne is hurl'd :
 Mercy smiles upon the world.

Once in gloom profound it lay
 To the powers of hell a prey.
 Sin the God-man shall destroy :†
 Welcome in the reign of joy !

Shine, thou sun, ye stars, retire :
 Light the heavens with purest fire :
 Nature, greet the Saviour-child,
 Blossom like the rose, each wild.‡

Sink, ye hills, ye valleys rise,||
 Tower, ye forests, to the skies,
 Ocean, from thy deepest cave
 Pour in joy th' exulting wave.

Hell has heard the tidings glad,
 Hell through all her realms is sad,
 Awed she dreads th' approaching hour,
 Crush'd her triumph and her power.

Haste the Father's love to tell,
 How with man God deigns to dwell,
 And the Spirit in this Child
 God and man hath reconciled.

* *Job, xxxviii., v. 7.*

† *1st John, iii., v. 8.* || "The desert shall rejoice and blossom as rose."—*Isaiah xxxv., v. 1.* ‡ *Isaiah xl., v. 4.*

HYMN FOR THE NATIVITY.

Sing ye an - gels of the morn,

Sing this day the Vir - gin - born:

Lo ! at length the Prince of Peace

Comes His peo - ple to re - lease.

THE TEMPTATION.

Our great Redeemer taught us all
 The tempter how to fight :
 The world, the flesh, the devil fall
 Before His conquering might.

Sinner, if want thy troubles raise,
 Think then how Christ refrain'd
 From food, and fasting forty days
 Temptation He sustain'd.

Do pride, ambition, grandeur lure,
 Christian, behold, thy Head
 Unmoved could hear of joys impure
 And turn to God instead.

If Satan whisper as a snare,
 " The right way thou hast trod ; "
 Presume not, but fall down in prayer :
 Tempt not the Lord thy God.

The Flesh.

The World.

The Devil.

THE TEMPTATION.

Our great Re - deem - er taught us all

The temp - ter how to fight; The

world, the flesh, the de - vil fall

Be - - fore His conquering might.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

Nailèd to th' accursèd tree
 Hangs the Saviour ! Sinner, see,
 This is what thy sins have done !
 Dost thou weep, or art thou stone ?
 All the curse of guilt descends
 On the sinner's best of friends,
 Concentrated woe unknown
 Piled on Him, on Him alone.

Sin had reached its utmost height ;
 Man with God had dared to fight.
 Hosts of hell let loose in power
 By permission ruled the hour ;
 And that loving heart could bear
 All that fiendish hate might dare :
 This He freely did endure
 Man to rescue and secure.

Scourges, shame, the rulers' frown,
 Wormwood, gall, the thorny crown,
 Clamour of the madden'd crowd,
 Lies and jeers and temptings loud,
 Base ingratitude, and pain,
 Such as ne'er was born again,
 Turn'd not from His great design
 Nor delayed the Man Divine.

Darken'd is the orb of day ;
 Earth is quivering in the fray.
 Of His sufferings what are seen
 Are but glimpses of the scene :
 Conflicts dire then raged within,
 War with all the gods of sin,
 Till the Lord of life and death
 Bade depart His dying breath.*

* John x., v. 18.

NAILED TO TH' ACCURSED TREE.

Nailed to th' accursed tree Hangs the Saviour! Sinner, see,
 This is what thy sins hath done! Dost thou weep, or art thou stone?
 All the curse of guilt descends On the sinner's best of friends;
 Concen-tra-ted woe unknown Pil'd on Him, on Him a - lone.

THE RESURRECTION.

*Far th' infernal hosts are fled :
Jesus rises from the dead !
Satan dares no more be seen
Near that grand, that glorious scene.

Victor o'er His hellish foes
From the tomb the Saviour goes :
That torn body ris'n and free
Chosen witnesses must see.

†To the women, struck with dread
“ He is ris'n,” the angel said,
“ He is not here ; fear not ye,
“ Where the Lord lay, come and see :
“ Quickly seek His friends and say
“ That the Lord hath ris'n this day.”
Hence they with great joy and fear
Run to tell each comrade dear ;
But before they tell their tale,
Jesus meets and cries, “ All hail.”
Welcome was the well-known voice,
Clinging to Him they rejoice :
Worship Him, and hold His feet,
And believe with joy complete.
“ Would,” He said, “ my friends see me,
“ Let them go to Galilee.”

THE RESURRECTION.

*1ST STRAIN.

Musical notation for the 1st strain, featuring two staves. The top staff is in common time, C major, with a dynamic of f . The lyrics are: "Far th' in - fer - nal hosts are fled;". The bottom staff is in common time, C major, with a dynamic of p . The lyrics are: "Je - sus ris - es from the dead!".

†2ND STRAIN.

Musical notation for the 2nd strain, featuring two staves. The top staff is in common time, C major. The lyrics are: "To the Wo - men, struck with dread". The bottom staff is in common time, C major. The lyrics are: "Je - sus ris - es from the dead!".

Musical notation for the 2nd strain, featuring two staves. The top staff is in common time, C major. The lyrics are: "To the Wo - men, struck with dread". The bottom staff is in common time, C major. The lyrics are: "Je - sus ris - es from the dead!".

NOTE.—The first and second strains must be used alternately, according to the sentiment of the words.

EVENING PRAYER.

MOST merciful Lord God, we thank Thee for having brought us with so much health and comfort to the close of another day. We thank Thee for having protected us from many perils known and unknown, and given us this opportunity of again worshipping and praising Thy Holy Name. We thank Thee not only for all the mercies which we ourselves have received, but for all Thy goodness showered down upon our friends and relatives, and all whom we should remember in our prayers. And we beseech Thee, gracious God, still to continue Thy loving kindness unto them and us. Take us under Thy care this night. Give us refreshing rest and sleep. Let Thy fatherly hand be over us, Thy Holy Spirit with us, to guide and direct our thoughts. May no evil happen unto us. If it please Thee that our lives be prolonged, grant that we may rise in the morning fitted for the duties of the day, with hearts more devoted to Thy service, and a lively sense of Thy continued loving kindness, and the many mercies which we have received during the past night. Our trust is in Thee ; and in the full assurance that by night and by day Thou wilt be with us by Thy blessed Spirit, we retire to our beds and place all our hopes of safety and protection in Thy mercy and goodness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

OUR Father, &c.

[On a Sunday add the following.]

BLESSED God, we pray Thee, give success to what Thy Ministers have uttered this day, so far as they may have spoken in accordance with Thy will. Grant that what we and others have heard may be abundantly blessed to the glory of Thy great name and the benefit of our immortal souls. Convince us by Thy Spirit, we beseech Thee, of the vanity of the world, of the shortness of life and of the unspeakable difference between heaven and hell. Bring us nearer to that Fountain still open for all uncleanness ; and enable us, with Thy help, every Sunday to approach nearer to Thee, to separate ourselves more from this world, and to think more of eternity. May the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ spread far and wide and open the door of salvation to multitudes now lying in darkness and the shadow of death. These our prayers we present humbly and earnestly through the great Redeemer who has taught us to pray, saying,

OUR Father, &c.

MAY grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ the Redeemer, and from the Holy Ghost the Comforter, be with us and all who belong to us, now and ever. Amen.

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